

IN WOMAN'S DEFENSE

MARY INMAN

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Sincerely,  
Mary J. Mann

# IN WOMAN'S DEFENSE

*By* MARY INMAN

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## FOREWORD

On October 14, 1939, the following announcement appeared in the *Daily People's World*, San Francisco, California:

One-half the human race, women, occupy a subjected position. Many people, even many women, will deny this. But it is acknowledged by all observant and thoughtful people.

Why are they subjected? On this question there are more and violently disputed views. Are they "inferior" to men? All manner of "theories" have been advanced to "prove" such a contention, and thus to justify woman's subjection as founded in nature and therefore beyond remedy.

It is a convenient apology. Yet by its use and general acceptance, not only woman, but man, too, is subjected; and man and woman relationships distorted and deformed to the grievous injury of mankind, family "troubles" and countless personal tragedies.

The People's World believes it is doing a tremendous service to mankind as a whole and to womankind in particular, in obtaining from a lifelong student of this complicated and confused subject, a work of clarity, science and inspiration, which we will begin publishing . . . . Monday.

This work, "In Woman's Defense," by Mary Inman, is invaluable for all, men as well as women, who seek to understand our society and to learn how to work for human progress. Its scholarly approach will appeal to club and university women, its keen perception that women's rights are inescapably tied to the rights of labor will make it an indispensable weapon of organized labor.

Indeed, "In Woman's Defense" should become a textbook for study and discussion among women trade unionists and trade union auxiliaries, not to mention mothers' groups and all progressive political forums without exception. . . .

Under ordinary conditions a longer work in book form would have followed naturally from the newspaper series, enriched by expressions of approval and disapproval of the readers.

But these are not ordinary conditions. The series was written to be run daily, but the dangers of war made a change from the daily to the weekly woman's page a necessity, so that an anti-war serial could be published. This seriously delayed the publication of the entire series and, since attempts to repress the people are increasing rapidly and are of such vital concern to women, it

was deemed advisable to issue the book in its present form.

Except for minor changes, the material is the same as that submitted to the *Daily People's World*, of which some dozen or so chapters had been published at the time the book went to press.

The author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to all those who have helped to make this work possible. She is indebted to her husband, especially for the anthropological material, and to Dr. Paul Radin, anthropologist, for confirming its accuracy. This latter was particularly important because of the battle that is going on in the anthropological field between the evolutionists, who adhere to the Morgan sociology, and the anti-evolutionists, as represented by the Boaz school.

Harrison George, editor of the *Daily People's World*, has helped greatly. In his unswerving loyalty to oppressed woman, and his sympathetic understanding, he has demonstrated the highest ideals of the people, as expressed through their leaders.

M. I.

## PREFACE

**P**ROGRESSIVE MEN AND WOMEN have long recognized in woman's relative social and political backwardness a menace to the people's economic security and civil liberties.

They have also recognized that women's inactivity injures women themselves, thwarts their social inclinations, atrophies their natural abilities and supports the claim that they are basically inferior.

Furthermore, they have recorded that wherever women became active participants in progressive political, economic or cultural movements that they were loyal, energetic and resourceful, and that as a result of such activities their lives became enriched.

How then to release woman's energies to herself and to the people, under the intensified drive of the war mongers and reactionaries, has become the Gordian knot of the present day.

Unfortunately, although the need is greater than ever, there seems to be no short cuts to this complicated historic task. Nor can the task be longer delayed on the claim that there is more important work to be done. There is no more urgent work than calling up the women reserves to help in the task that inevitably lies ahead.

Too often in the past women themselves have been blamed for their backwardness. This is an error, both in fact and in tactics. In fact, because the backwardness of women is only one of three strands of the Gordian knot. These strands intertwine and are drawn tightly together and strengthen and support one another, and to analyze the problem as consisting only in woman's backwardness is not enough, and immensely over-simplifies the whole problem. Furthermore, action based on such false analysis will necessarily be inadequate and lead to defeat.

In addition to it being bad tactics to blame women and attack them for their backwardness, such a course is not consistent with

the established policy of the people toward oppressed groups, which is one not of condemning, but of "explaining patiently" and of striving to have them understand their problems.

Unaided, women cannot effectively organize to overcome their condition, not any more than other subject groups such as workers and Negroes can effectively organize, unaided by the vanguard of the working class, the most advanced political organizations, trade unions, cultural groups and individual progressive men and women.

*All three strands of the Gordian knot that binds woman must be cut:* Women's ideological backwardness must be overcome by tying in their particular problems with the problems of the people. The backward method of their work must be improved to some degree, at least they must have partial relief from unnecessary household drudgery and 24-hour care of small children in isolated household units. And last, but not least, the backward attitude of a great many people's organizations, and their reluctance to effectively take up the task of organizing women, must be changed.

Finally, it all boils down to this: women must be activized in the interests of the people, and the people must be activized in the interests of women.

Society today is highly organized and theory applied to woman is social theory, and represents the opinions not of individuals, nor of biological groups, such as men or women, but of economic classes.

The first task is to sort out the theories and values of the two conflicting economic classes in society, that woman and her allies may clearly see what are the programs of these two classes applied to woman, and thus achieve closer political and social unity.

It is this that we shall attempt to do in the following pages.

Los Angeles, California.

December 20, 1939.

MARY INMAN

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## I

### *The Reactionaries Attack*

**T**ORY AND FASCISTICALLY INCLINED WRITERS seek to alienate women from men, by creating in man's mind the theory that woman belongs to some sub-human species, in the same manner as they wish whites to think Negroes are sub-human and non-Jews to consider Jews sub-human, and for the same reason: to sow social disunity.

K. A. Wieth-Knudsen, "professor of Economics and Jurisprudence in the Norwegian Technical College, Trondhjem," in his book "Understanding Woman," tells us that woman is unlike man, who is of the same species, but bears a striking similarity to the mare, who is of a different species. He writes:

. . . . . The sun is shining, your mare is ready saddled; you look forward to a gallop across the fields and think the mare will enjoy it as much as you [!] . . . . but she is cross as a cat, backs away as you try to mount . . . . she stumbles every second, obviously on purpose . . . . you can hardly get her to trot; you daren't ask her to gallop, she might find it a welcome pretext for falling and breaking your neck . . . . you turn back discouraged . . . .

. . . . . two days later it rains in torrents . . . . we put on all the most weatherproof clothes we can find, take spurs and whip; now we shall see who's master, she or I . . . . but today she obeys the slightest hint and there is such speed in her that I get cramp in the arms from holding her in . . . . I come home bathed in perspiration . . . . she has taught me something, not only of her own nature, but of the otherwise enigmatical, ineradicable, impenetrable capriciousness of the feminine gender . . . .

Not only does Professor Wieth-Knudsen laud man as being superior to woman and say of their relative merits, "man only lies when the knife is at his throat . . . woman will avail herself of falsehood early and late . . .," but he admires a particular kind of man, "the white man . . . more narrowly defined as the

Nordic type of European man; tall, slender figure, long legs, especially the tibia, blue eyes, fair hair, narrow face, straight or slightly curved nose with high root, long skull, etc. . . ."

Other writers, who perhaps would not go as far as Wieth-Knudsen in some of his conclusions, are nevertheless fond of saying that men and women can no more be compared than the peach and pear, or the dog and cat.

Dogs do not come from cats, and these writers seem to have forgotten an ABC of biology, that men and women come from each other, and, genetically, are inseparable parts of one another.

The embryo starts its career as a separate entity only by the combining of a seed from each of the parents, and to that extent the mother enters into its composition half way.

It lives and grows inside her body and is nourished by her juices for about nine months, during which time it changes from a tiny speck of protoplasm, too small to be seen with the naked eye, to a complicated human mechanism.

She develops it and molds it into a human being. Its chemistry comes almost wholly from her. How then can any child ever be as dissimilar to its mother, of whom it is a part, as men are commonly supposed to be to women?

The program of Wieth-Knudsen is simple enough. He seeks to unite all white men for a campaign of oppression against white women. He declares that this is necessary in order to save civilization, because unless white women are crushed the white race will lose ground to other races, whom he asserts are more oppressive in their treatment of women.

Are *all* white men then to be equal under this super-caste of white males? Not at all. Within this dominant white male group there resides a small number who stand as overlords in relation to the rest, who are relegated to an inferior oppressed caste.

The great majority of white men are asked to unite, not for the purpose of freeing themselves, but for the purpose of enslaving

others. They are asked to line up against the women of their own household, with and for strangers of the Wieth-Knudsen variety, and the numerically small overlord class they represent.

The degradation of woman is an inseparable part of the oppression of the people, but few reactionary writers link the two together as brazenly and openly as Wieth-Knudsen does.

They cannot accomplish their aims by convincing people of the sanity and justice of their program, and the fascists were able to rob the German women of their hard-won cultural and economic gains only after the labor unions and the people's democratic organizations were crushed.

For this reason, the program of those who are trying to set time back for women in the United States, usually appears not as a straight line, stated by one writer like Wieth-Knudsen, but as disjointed pieces, stated by many writers, which on the surface have no apparent connection with one another.

Yet, when the social philosophy of these writers is examined they are seen to have a well-rounded out retrogressive theory for the people, of which that applying to woman is a necessary part.

Will Durant, in the *Saturday Evening Post*, recently deplored the loss of the home as a production unit, which bound the working man as the petty overseer of his producing children and wife.

Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the Rockefeller Institute, in the *Reader's Digest*, June, 1939, advocated the return to breast feeding, which would tie mothers to a particular kind of work that revolves around the feeding schedule of babies in isolated households, making the use of public nurseries for such women a physical impossibility.

Bills have been introduced in several state legislatures, seeking to ban married women from work where wages are paid. Their introduction was accompanied by an intensive campaign of propaganda, printed and spoken, saying the unemployment of men is caused by women taking their jobs.

H. L. Mencken, who started soon after the first world war to attack democracy, labor unions and poor farmers, and to preach what we now identify as the fascist doctrines, ground through the Mencken mill and stamped with the Mencken literary style, slanderous opinions which people like Oscar Wilde and Schopenhauer had expressed about women for several generations.

He labeled these opinions, "In Defense of Women," and this book has had a wide circulation. A woman in England became so indignant, she wrote a book just to answer it.

On the distaff side, the Hearst columnists Elsie Robinson and Kathleen Norris coach women in the theories which Hearst approves of their having.

And Mrs. Bessie Ochs, organizer of "The Neutral Thousands," which was exposed by the LaFollette Senate Committee as a stooge of "The Associated Farmers," a tool of the banks, seeks to weaken labor unions, which stand as a protecting bulwark between women and their oppressors. Furthermore she wants to degrade women to the role of helping to betray their own friends to the enemy.

What a choice collection of misleading labels such people use to conceal their real aims: Wieth-Knudsen's "Understanding Women," in which women are compared with mares. Mencken's attack, called "In Defense of Women." Bessie Och's unneutral "Neutral Thousands." And the bankers "Associated Farmers." All fiddling the same tune as Hitler, who calls monopoly capitalism in Germany "National Socialism."

Westbrook Pegler, whose syndicated column reaches more than six million readers through 117 newspapers, recently took time out from criticizing progressive political and trade union leaders to do some plain and fancy woman-baiting.

On Nov. 10, 1939, Pegler wrote authoritatively of the most complex psychological reactions of women, to their discredit. But five days later he begins his column by stating: "Ladies constitute

a separate race, so different from men that it is impossible to understand them. The best a man can do is guess." Then he immediately launched into another adverse description of their thoughts and motives.

Causing men to mistrust and despise women is not the extent of the damage such persons do. They give the impression that they are stating the case for men, and this leads women to blame not the Peglers, but men, for such opinions.

After all, it is Wieth-Knudsen, and not men, who says: "Man only lies when the knife is at his throat . . . woman will avail herself of falsehood early and late . . ."

All this affects adversely not only the relationship within the intimate family group, but causes injury between unrelated men and women, and spreads distrust and suspicion between them in their trade unions, and on the job, and is a bar to labor and political unity, right at a time when they need unity.

It is inevitable that there should exist a great deal of puzzlement over what is the nature of woman, and also what is the nature of man, for not only have the Peglers and Menckens squiddled up the waters, but of the three main schools of theory that attempt to account for woman's low economic and cultural status in society, one seeks the answer in the nature of woman, and one hunts the answer in the nature of man.

The third theory finds the solution in the complex nature of our society, and especially in its production relations.

When these three schools of thought are analyzed we can plainly see what are the interests of the groups from which they spring.

## II

### *Three Theories About Women*

**O**N FIRST CONSIDERATION the great amount of books and printed matter on the subject of woman appears to be a hopelessly confused mass. But on closer examination they lose many of their contradictory features and are quite readily classifiable into three main streams of theory. These streams of thought comprise the theories of the people; the codes of the subjectors; and the philosophy of the feminists.

The basic theory of the feminist movement was embodied in the writings of John Stuart Mill, whose book, "The Subjection of Women," written in 1869, discounted an economic basis for woman's subjugation and defined it instead as a contest between men and women, citing man's greater physical strength as the means by which he effected his domination.

In contra-distinction to the exploiting class, who denied an economic cause for woman's status and blamed the nature of woman, the feminists denied an economic cause and blamed the nature of man.

The feminists thought that woman's freedom would benefit society, while the dominant class, that opposed them, claimed that such a course would weaken and might even destroy society.

The people's leaders had as their basic theory about women, that she had once been free, and would be again free, and that this was socially and individually very desirable. The spokesmen for the people said that woman's struggle for freedom was part of the people's struggle for freedom. They denied that woman's problem arose because of the nature of *either* man or woman, but contended instead that woman's low position in society was due

to economic causes.

In opposition to the feminists was arrayed the dominant economic classes who for thousands of years pursued a program of suppression toward women. Their most exalted, Jehovah, Aristotle and the Bard of Avon, variously sentenced women to servitude and stamped their low status with inevitability, unchangeability and approval.

Others preceded these, and still others have come since, including many lesser lights like Schopenhauer, Oscar Wilde, Mencken and Wieth-Knudsen.

The defenders of inequality justified woman's subservient position by claiming it suited her nature. They said that she was unfitted by her mental and physical structure for equality.

Wieth-Knudsen, in "Feminism," attacks the feminists with the utmost venom because they advocated equality for women, declaring woman to be so constituted by nature as to make it equitable and right for man to oppress her, but saying that man must not be blamed when he acts in an oppressive manner, because woman's nature is such that she herself plots and contrives to bring this about.

The principal error the feminists made was their failure to take into account the most important fact of woman's subjugation: that ever since the overthrow of free tribal society woman's labor has successively enriched the chattel slave owners, the feudal lords and the capitalists, and to the acquisition by these owners of the value of her toil can be traced all the inequality and injustice she has known throughout the ages.

The role played by the feminists in woman's struggles has been both overemphasized and underestimated. The feminists furnished the leadership for a movement that drew its main support from a part of the people who did not agree with their economic interpretations, yet supported the feminists because they favored equality for women.

The people's leaders, with their theories of equality about woman, and tracing her inequality to an economic cause, came into conflict with both the feminists, who steered clear of economic entanglements and interpretations, and the powerful exploiting class, whom the spokesmen of the people charged directly with being the cause of woman's troubles.

Thus while the forces of the people supported the progressive features of the feminists' demands for women, they pointed out the error made by the feminists in trying to ignore basic economic issues. And the successes of the feminists, limited as they were, would have been impossible except for the support of the people.

But there were other reasons for the feminist victories, chief of which was that they departed from their narrow theoretical base, and oftentimes assaulted the very citadels of exploitation, as when they came out for the freedom of the Negro people from chattel slavery, and also when they participated in the organization of labor unions. Such activities vitalized the movement as nothing else could have done.

The theory of the feminists that *men* ruled was rendered more plausible by those cases where products were manufactured in the home for sale, and any surplus money was appropriated by the man, who was the legal head of the producing family unit composed of his wife and children. On farms where a marketable crop was raised by the combined toil of the family, and the man had expectations of money from the labor of his family, money which he deemed to be his rightful and sole possession, the process was similar.

In general, the entire working population of men, women and children toiled for the landlord-banker class who had various means of acquiring all the surplus. Still the system of family exploitation was a corrupting influence on the man, and especially so when he had no social training to offset the ideology of the bourgeoisie, extolling the exploitation of others. Such theories

reached him through many channels, while preachers said that it was right that a man should rule over his wife and children.

Under an economy where men exploited their wives and children, and were oppressive toward them, it was both reasonable and proper to expose them. This the feminists did, and this situation permitted them to gain benefits for women, though hampered by the fundamentally unsound theory of John Stuart Mill, capitalist economist, that woman's oppression comes from man and not from classes.

"The Subjection of Women," was republished in 1911, with a foreword by Carrie Chapman Catt, who assures us that Mill's book "must ever be regarded as the most complete statement of fundamental principles which the woman's movement has produced" and that (in this work) "no one has discovered a missing basic truth or succeeded in making an important addition."

Mrs. Catt does not take into account the basic scientific work of Lewis Henry Morgan, American anthropologist, who performed an invaluable service for women by his discoveries which show that at one stage of social development women were everywhere free and equal members of society.

Frederick Engels, in the preface to "The Origin of the Family," points out that Morgan's discoveries of the maternal gens (motherhood family-clan) stand in relation to primeval history as the findings of Darwin stand in relation to the evolution of biology and Marx's theory of surplus value to political economy.

There was some excuse for Mill, writing in 1869, not knowing these things, but there seems to be no excuse for Mrs. Catt, writing in 1911, with "forty-two years of activity in the so-called woman movement" behind her, not knowing that the findings of Morgan, published in 1877, were a "missing basic truth."

Morgan has been a thorn in the side of those who wish to find a basis for slavery in human nature, and the key to the subjugation of women in male nature. *For Morgan attributed changes*

*in social organizations to changes in the modes of production.*

In defense of Morgan, T. A. Jackson, in "Dialectics," says:

... It is saddening to see Sidney Hook . . . allowing himself to be intimidated by the anthropological orthodoxy current in Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and other academic fortresses of the "defense mechanism" of American imperialism. It is "the fashion" to say that "Morgan is outmoded." But then it always has been "the fashion" to say this ever since Morgan wrote. And it was for this reason that Engels (with Marx's approval) rallied to Morgan's defence . . .

As an attack on some of the false theories about woman, Mill's arguments were logical and brilliant. He struck out clearly and boldly for her complete equality, declaring it to be individually and socially desirable.

Yet, in historical outlook and economic interpretation, Mill's book on woman does not have the merit of the book, "Woman, Past, Present and Future," written by August Bebel in 1895, which took into account the findings of Morgan and was based on the works of Marx and Engels. And the reason it is not as worthwhile, Bebel *did* give the "fundamental principles" of woman's subjugation, and its political and economic significance.

Mill was influenced in his opinions by ancient forms of slavery and the customs prevailing in conquered tribes. He did not think woman had ever been free, and equal to man, and when he refuted the claim that her subjugation is due to an inferior nature, and at the same time denied its economic origin, there was nothing left to blame but the nature of man.

But when he traced her oppression to man, he thereby distorted man's nature, and in the end, woman's nature as well.

It makes all the difference in the world in evaluating woman's nature to determine what holds her to oppression, whether it is individual man or an economically powerful social class, that uses against her political institutions of both church and state, reinforced by their ownership of the means of production. And whether this class controls the very bread and meat of the vast

majority of men through whom the vast majority of women must seek their second-hand economic existence, and whether this dominant social class uses *all* these instruments on men as well as women to hold them to their respective roles of overseers and overseen. This sort of arrangement places an entirely different light on the nature of woman, in so far as determining why she submits to oppression, than would appear if we merely said that her oppression arises from the individual female tamely submitting to being dominated by the individual male, when there was no good reason for her doing so, and it also places a different light on the nature of man.

### III

#### *"Women Don't Know How to Walk!"*

**T**HERE HAS GROWN UP within the last two decades or so a mistaken theory that only the feminists considered women an oppressed group in society, and that, consequently, anyone holding such an opinion is a feminist.

Those who honestly express this belief demonstrate their lack of understanding of the basic traditions of the people's movements, which included people of various political beliefs, who, nevertheless, sought to democratize our social institutions and extend to every citizen full citizenship, regardless of race, color, sex or creed.

The Communist International, organ of the Communist Parties of 68 countries, officially recognized a few years ago, "the necessity of struggling against the ideology of female bondage."

Typical of another group was Lewis H. Morgan, whose book, "Ancient Society," is highly important to the woman's movement because it proves that women were once free and dignified members of society.

Morgan was a respected scientist, whose reports were published by the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, belonged to the National Academy of Sciences, and politically was neither a socialist nor communist, yet he wanted women to again be free.

Representative of still a third category was August Bebel, whose book, "Woman," defining woman's status as that of a subject, is still the principal theoretical work on this topic, used by progressive organizations in the United States today.

The National Negro Congress in 1936, attended by 817 delegates from 585 organizations, showed its awareness of woman's oppression, by the statement that "Negro women are thrice ex-

exploited, as women, as workers, and as Negroes."

Lenin, Communist theoretician, told Clara Zetkin, "We hate, yes, hate everything, and will abolish everything which tortures and oppresses the woman worker, the housewife, the peasant woman, the wife of the petty trader, yes, and in many cases the women of the possessing classes."

What belongs specifically to the feminists is not the admission that woman is oppressed, but this admission coupled with the denial that her oppression has a class basis, to which was added peculiar interpretations of their own, as they attempted to account for the effects of an economic process whose existence they denied.

The feminists said there is *rule by men*.

The spokesmen of the people said that is an error, there is *rule by a class*. But they failed to explain clearly why there is male domination in the subject classes, and this left the feminists with their principal confusing error on which to build.

Nor was the injury, caused by the failure to do this, confined to the followers of the feminists. In the camp of the people there gradually grew up a group with strong sectarian views, which helped strangle all of woman's activities except those of the narrowest dimensions.

They had as their basic theory that woman is not subjugated, but that only toiling women and the wives of toilers are oppressed. This ideology isolated working class women from women of the middle and professional classes, and from clubwomen and churchwomen on matters of woman's subjugation, except as the interests of these more conservative groups could be stimulated in working woman's grievances, not on the basis of gains for themselves, but of sympathy for her.

The feminists couldn't believe woman's oppression has a class base because they had evidence that it crosses class lines.

The left sectarians couldn't believe the oppression of woman crosses class lines, because they had evidence that it has a class

base.

Clara Zetkin approved of Lenin's program for activizing women, but warned him that it would be called feministic by the sectarians. To this he replied: ". . . I know them. Many revolutionary but confused minds appeal to principle 'whenever ideas are lacking.' That is, when the mind is closed to the sober facts, which must be considered."

The left sectarians insisted that all discussion of the conflict between men and women be kept away from the workers, on the basis that it would set working class men and women against one another.

This demonstrated that they themselves were unaware of the basis of this conflict and attached an importance to it that does not exist; that they themselves thought this conflict basically biological and insurmountable.

This hush-hush line carried out would have an impoverishing effect upon important social theory affecting subject woman's life, and would leave a detailed analysis and accounting of such conflict to the Menckens and Peglers. Certainly this would be dangerous business.

This complex subject cannot be rendered simple merely by amputating some of its vital parts, and failure, either through inability or disinclination, to explain the relative economic, political and social status of men and women in terms of sound economic theory contributes to existing confusion, and supports the claim that man and not an economic class is responsible for woman's unequal status.

Furthermore, to say that a working class man, who had theories about women that were oppressive and representative of male chauvinism, would be harmed if such opinions were exposed as anti-social, and as having come from an exploiting class in the first place, would be as logical as saying that it would harm a white worker to give up an oppressive attitude toward a Negro,

or that a non-Jewish worker would be harmed by giving up an oppressive attitude toward the Jewish race.

A common means of discrediting women is calling them vile names. No other person or thing, animate or inanimate, has been called as many names as woman. We list sixty-three of the mildest out of more than ninety such labels, in more or less common use in the United States:

Baggage	Gabbler	She-devil
Ball and Chain	Gad-about	Shrew
Bat, old	Gold-digger	Skirt
Battle-axe	Gossip	Slattern
Better Half (smirk)	Grass-widow	Slut
Boss (smirk)	Hag	Snip
Cat	Harpy	Sod-widow
Chicken	Hay-bag	Sorceress
Cow	Heifer	Sow
Crone	Hell-cat	Squaw
Cutie	Hen	Storm and Strife
Dame, a	Hussy	Tattler
Dizzie, a	Jane	Tomato
Dumb-bell	Mare (especially	Toots
Dumb Dora	"Mare Nigger")	Twist & Twirl
Dumb-kluck	Meddler	Vamp (vampire,
Filly	Moll	blood sucker)
Flapper	Nagger	Vixen (female fox)
Flirt	Old Maid	Weaker Sex
Frail	Pain	Wench
Frump	Pony	Witch
Fury	Rib	

There is nothing discrediting about a hen and cow as such, yet merely by the terms being associated with woman these simple nouns have acquired a stigma which they never had before this association. Some of woman's disgrace has transferred itself to these useful and inoffensive animals.

The "smartest" writers unhesitatingly call women the vilest names. P. G. Wodehouse in the Saturday Evening Post, July 23, 1938, has one of his respectable upper class characters call a respectable young lady of his own class a "blister."

The magazine "Esquire" makes frequent use of names of this class.

Persons who call women degrading names are doing a socially oppressive act, whether they know it or not.

There is nothing in the rules of subjugation barring Jews from calling other Jews "sheeny," neither is there anything barring a Negro from calling another Negro a "nigger."

We know, however, that this is not the origin nor purpose of these names, but that instead it is part of the means of setting non-Jews against Jews and whites against Negroes.

And so it is in the case of woman. Women are encouraged to call one another vile names, but those women who do this are themselves subject to being so identified as long as women are oppressed.

There are comparatively few discrediting names for whites and non-Jews as such. And there are also comparatively few discrediting names for a man. Significantly two of the worst insults are based upon first discrediting his mother.

Women are slanderously attacked as a biological group, just like the Jews and Negroes. Not along racial lines, but on the basis of femaleness; thus the campaign against women includes half the human race.

E. V. Durling, columnist, in the labor-baiting Los Angeles Times does not say "Working women don't know how to walk." Nor does he say that middle class women don't know how to walk.

He stated in his column, Nov. 20, 1939, that a group of high-school girls sent him a letter objecting to his saying that less than one per cent of the women know how to walk. He tried to laugh their protest off as a joke.

The woman-baiters do not say that *working* women cannot think, walk, drive an automobile, reason, be logical or play fairly, but that *women* cannot think, walk, drive an automobile, reason, be logical or play fairly.

## IV

### *The Whisker Solution*

ON AN INTELLECTUAL PAR with the medieval philosopher who sought the solution to problems of state in the intestines of a bird, are those persons who seek the answer to the relatively low economic status of women in the menses of women and the whiskers of men.

It is fantastic that even man's whiskers have not been wasted but have been pressed into service to explain this problem and have taken on qualities beyond mere hair.

A variation in theory is that it is not whiskers which raised man to a higher economic plane than woman but that the thing which produces whiskers produces also superior traits in him.

If X equals the unknown quality which produces both whiskers and intellect then the heavier the beard the more there is of X. and consequently the more there will also be of intellect, since X is the fountain from which both spring. This makes the task of estimating intelligence very easy, as, of course, the smartest men will be the hairiest.

In one of the newest books on woman, the author places the beginning of woman's inequality back in the pre-history stage of society. According to this author, everybody shunned woman like she had the plague, because of her menses. Parts of the book are sensibly written, which makes such an absurd accounting of woman's subjugation all the more likely to be believed.

The theory is a popular one, and this author is not the first one to state it. But she gives it a new twist in going back further into the twilight of society to establish the origin of woman's inequality which, presumably, makes either its confirmation or refutation impossible.

There is, however, proof that she is in error. The investigations of Lewis H. Morgan proved that at one stage of society woman was, for a long time, and until fairly recently, a free and important person. This refutes the menses solution, and, incidentally, the whisker solution also.

Left with such false foundations unchallenged, woman's enemies can build the same old hateful structure and make the conflict between men and women appear to arise not from social conflicts and artificial training, but from a biological difference, and thus place the stamp of inevitability upon such conflicts, because their biological differences can hardly be changed.

The pioneer women of America worked as hard and sometimes even harder than men. Many worked in the fields and woods and then did housework and manufactured articles in the home after quitting time; toiling fourteen and sixteen hours a day.

The pioneer woman certainly did her quota of work, so her servitude did not arise from a parasitical position of not producing her food and shelter, or its equivalent, and of having to depend upon someone else to produce her living for her because she had menses and children. And she certainly bore her quota of children, twelve being not an unusual number.

Women *should* have special consideration and care before, during and after childbirth, for the good of both mother and child. She should have this care to a greater degree and extent than she has ever had it under subjugation.

The inadequate help she has had was gotten in opposition to the exploiters, who used woman's need for aid as a basis for charging that the inequalities she lived under was the price she must pay, either for her handicap of being a childbearer, or because she was especially favored to offset this handicap.

Today women, despite menses and childbearing, are working in office, field and factory, in every country in the world, doing hard work and intricate delicate tasks. Many of them are work-

ing harder than either man or woman should work, harder even than a mule should work. The majority are not subsisting parasitically on the labor of others, and it is absurd to say that the answer to woman's oppression is to be found in her physical structure.

Men have whiskers. Women have menses. What of it? Does either cause or prevent the ability to receive and transmit impressions, analyze situations, draw conclusions, or make decisions? Does the possession or non-possession of either of these things interfere with the ability to act on decisions once made?

Do they impair the ability to fend for oneself and one's own? Or interfere with the exercise of loyalty, toleration, kindness or sympathy for others? If they do not interfere with any of these functions, then they are not important in determining the relative social status of men and women.

In an effort to establish belief in a non-existent physical difference between men and women, there are all those claims which have a basis for comparison laid in other animal groups. Men and women are compared with the rooster and hen, the bull and cow and other forms of animal life.

Those who laud the sex lives of chickens as a pattern for humans, would think we were crazy if we, with equal gusto and fervor, advocated humans deserting their beds and squatting all night long on pole roosts, or sleeping perched on the branch of a bush or tree.

We are told that the numerical allotment affecting roosters and hens furnishes us with the key to the natures of men and women. These rooster philosophers choose to overlook the rather obvious fact that the poultry owner does the arranging and not the chickens, and that the plan involves the killing of most of the male chickens when they are young.

Would one of these chicken advocates be willing to be one of the males slaughtered, in order to make possible this "ideal"

arrangement whereby another man might have a dozen or two females?

And so also with horses and cattle. The stock breeder has arranged things to suit himself, going about making steers and geldings; certainly an artificial arrangement for the animals. In the natural state, there would be about the same number of males and females and during the mating period they would be more equally adjusted to one another numerically.

The almost invariable practice of never disassociating woman from sex, does her great injury. How out of place it would seem if we attempted to divide men into two groups, decent and indecent, determined by their sex life and practices. Society in general and men in particular would resent and scorn such an absurd generalization for men.

The things about a man which are important are, is he a kind, considerate father; an accommodating neighbor; can he be depended upon for help in times of sickness, disaster or distress? Is he well balanced in the give-and-take game of life, or is he unbalanced, consequently gives or compromises too much, or, conversely, is too domineering and takes too much?

Does he respond with sympathy and appreciation to friendship and loyalty? Is he capable of sustained effort; of logical and analytical reasoning? Can he reason from cause to effect?

Is he fairly tolerant of the opinions of others, or does he believe that everyone holding contrary opinions to himself should be lynched? Does he favor oppression? Does he defend grafters, cheaters and swindlers and say enviously that he would do the same thing if given the opportunity?

Or, does he deplore such practices as lynching, prostitution and graft? Is he grieved by disease, insanity, suicide and charity and would he favor their cause being removed? Is he indignant over child labor, malnutrition and wholesale massacres by wars of conquest, and would he like to see all these things abolished?

Is he intelligent enough to understand some of the underlying causes of these things, or does he live in a world about which he knows nothing, repeating parrot-like a few stock phrases which have no connection with reality?

All these matters are of great importance to his neighbors and society, and not whom he slept with last night or a month ago, or a year ago, and whether or not he is young and beautiful.

## V

### *All Women Not Subjugated Alike*

**A** GREAT MANY PROTECTIVE THEORIES and attitudes surround the subject of woman's status and prevent the discussion its importance merits. Not the least of these is the reluctance of women themselves to call attention to their oppression.

In this they react as other subject groups and not altogether illogically, for they seek to lessen their miseries by not calling attention to them.

Yet, by an avoidance of the subject, women do not escape these discriminations nor cause their subjugation to either lessen or disappear.

Instead, quite the opposite is true, for only as there has been resistance has there been a cessation of discrimination, and this resistance was more potent because woman's grievances were aired and sentiment favorable to her solidified.

Furthermore, wherever this negative attitude exists it has been turned into a positive weapon against woman, and hostile forces have cited such non-resistance and interpreted it as signifying that woman approves of her unequal status, and is not in conflict with it.

In addition to being hampered by the reluctance of women, the woman's movement has been strenuously opposed from the camp of the reactionary right, and inadequately understood and hamstrung by extreme left sectarians.

Especially did the left sectarians find the rich woman an insurmountable barrier to their understanding of woman's subjugation. Thus by preventing an adequate investigation of conditions applying to women, the rich woman assumed an importance that she does not possess in reality.

Actually the rich woman is not very important, separated from her class, and it is significant that those who think she is have not infrequently substituted the owning class woman for the owning class, when talking about woman's grievances, and there seems to be much less resentment felt for owning class men than for owning class women.

This is not at all incompatible with fascist tendencies, for we find that in certain motion pictures and literature they also have substituted the rich woman for her class, after the same fashion as blaming rich Jews for the ills arising from capitalism.

It is rather obvious that from women of the dominant owning class, now as heretofore, working and middle class women can expect little help and much opposition, both in improving economic and cultural standards for women, and in going on to full equality for women.

Nevertheless to deny that such women have a status lower than men of their class, is to claim that the effects of subjugation are less widespread than they are, and is also to fail to take into account a very important contradiction and conflict in the camp of the owning class.

For each woman of the dominant owning class wants freedom for herself, and strives individually for its attainment, even though she may also strive to maintain class divisions from which her inequalities spring.

Actually a woman with a million dollars is in somewhat the same position as a Negro with a million dollars. Like the Negro, there are many unpleasant things adhering to her status from which she can buy off, under a system that has a price tag for most things, and makes pets out of rich people.

But, also like the Negro, there are things from which she cannot buy off. Since the indictment of women is placed on a biological basis, rich women would not be able to escape this indictment altogether.

Besides the rich do not entirely escape the effects of things the working people experience. They catch some of the diseases that arise from and flourish only under poverty conditions. And sometimes the minds of their children are permanently dulled by poisonous philosophies, meant only to addle the minds of the exploited.

All women are subjugated, but all are not exploited. Of those who are exploited, part are exploited for their labor, and others are exploited as sex slaves.

The most important strata of women are those of the working and producing classes. In their exploitation is to be found the key to the oppression of woman. But they are not the most oppressed, for they have economic power, and they have not been altogether isolated.

The most oppressed are the commercial prostitutes, who are exploited by finance capitalists who have invested their money in the vice business. These women are without economic power, and they have been completely isolated as a subject group.

The housewife has a different status from that of the woman wage worker. In the case of the housewife, more than any other group, there has been a lag in the method of performing socially useful work in isolated household units, by outmoded hand methods, which is a distinct handicap in a machine age, besides making her problems relating to the economic crisis more difficult of solution.

Yet, although the work housewives do is outmoded, it nevertheless is indispensable social labor, and because of this they are a force to be reckoned with. Also because of this there has been a deluge of propaganda, issued by forces harmful to woman, depreciating both her importance in relation to the process of wealth production, and her power to influence political and social trends.

Furthermore, conditions of subjugation are not uniform for

all countries because the processes of wealth production and their development are uneven and this causes unevenness in the development of social and political institutions.

In Japan more than 50% of the industrial workers are women. Here at first glance appears to be a situation that would enable Japanese women to throw off a great deal of the oppression which is keyed to femaleness.

But with the progressive move of women working in social production outside the home, is combined the fact that Japan is still in the early stages of capitalism, and is semi-feudalistic, therefore Japanese women industrial workers experience few of the benefits that should come from improved methods of production.

The Japanese peasant . . . boys go into the army, the girls go into the factory. They go into the factory literally, for they eat and sleep and live there as well as work . . . they don't go home until two or even more years have elapsed . . . thousands of country villages in Japan have practically no young girls left in them. The girls have gone to Osaka, to Kobe, Tokyo and other great industrial centers. They live in barracks in mill compounds . . .

J. P. McEvoy, Saturday Evening Post, Aug. 28, 1938.

In addition to the wide variation in conditions for women, which can be traced directly to the manner in which they work, cultural and social variations are also very great.

A great deal depends upon a woman's family and the attitude of its members toward her and toward social problems in general, and whether they are liberal or reactionary.

Does she herself belong to a progressive social or political organization? If she does, this of itself will make her life more livable, even though she is a dependent housewife, than that of the woman wage worker who is economically independent, yet does not come into contact with organized social groups favoring equality for women and liberty for the people.

Certain estimates of value, used to sustain the subject status

of woman, become the common denominator applicable to women of all races, colors and creeds wherever women are not free. These include artificial youth and beauty standards, centering around marriage as a market; some form of isolation and segregation; the charge of mental incompetence, which is based on the wife taking a position subordinate to the husband and conducting herself in the manner of a subordinate; and, in addition, economic dependence for most women.

A popular misconception is based on the exaggerated claim that women in the United States are not bound economically to the state of marriage as formerly but that any woman has, therefore all women have a free choice between "work" and marriage.

According to the 1930 census, 38,070,000 gainful occupations out of 48,820,000 were held by men. Population figures reveal 27,320,000 women who have no direct employment but must obtain their living second-hand, either from the thirty-eight million men who are employed or that portion of the ten million women who earn a surplus over their own support.

*23 million married women in the United States have no earnings or income of their own and must depend solely upon the money their husbands give them.*

The economic dependence of women upon men of their family, has helped conceal the class basis of woman's oppression, for those men who are keepers of the family purse have an actual and not just a theoretical economic status over their wives and female dependents. This, of course, is bound to have certain effects on both men and women. But these effects fall far short of accounting for the subjugation of women.

## VI

### *The Opposition Sex Theory*

**T**HE CLAIM THAT MAN is the beneficiary of woman's oppression can be kept alive only on the basis of the widest misunderstanding, first, as to what the woman problem is, and secondly, as to the effect the woman question has upon man: that of the woman problem is born a man problem.

The man question includes first of all the economic dependence of his womenfolk upon him, and their consequent insecurity which is passed on to him. For many difficulties arise during the process of supporting them under an economic system that has as one of its inherent qualities a never ending stream of unemployed.

Primary difficulties arise, such as being able to support them at all and of having their dependence bind him to exploitation, and secondary difficulties, such as being subject to the charge of incompetence and the feeling of having failed when the support or standard of living is inadequate.

Secondly, man has had assigned to him arbitrarily the degrading role and unwelcome task of helping to dominate and oppress women, not only of his own household but acquaintances and even strangers, for he has a dominant role to play and attitude to maintain toward women as a social group.

Thirdly, he has become a buffer between the real oppressors and women, and has to bear the brunt of woman's resentment in those cases where she thinks of him, not as contributing unwillingly, or mistakenly, to her subject status, but of being the sole cause of it.

This conflict not only increases the discomforts of both men and women, but has the added effect of keeping them from attaining a unity of action in reference to their broader problems.

The woman problem, in turn, consists first of all in being held to an outmoded method of work and of being economically dependent upon a man who has been trained to use what economic power he thus has over her to hold her to a role subservient to him, in the interest of an economic class.

Secondly, of having her resentment and resistance deflected and channeled off in such a way as to spend itself against man, instead of her oppressors, and thus do her the least good, and perhaps even the most harm.

Thirdly, of having been deprived of man's help as an ally, and of being thrown into a hateful situation of living in subservience to him.

Furthermore, of having the conflict between men and women producing in turn a conflict between women and women to such a degree that women have not only been isolated from man *but from other women as well.*

For in those cases where women are convinced that the struggle is one between men and women, they generally prefer to take sides with the men of their own economic group and household and try as individuals to escape the discrimination levied against women, rather than line up with outside, strange women, supporting what they deem to be harmful to their own menfolk. This attitude has even led women into an attack on women, thinking they are thereby defending men of their own economic group.

Is it surprising that from a complex situation like this that there should have arisen a great many confusing theories, which exist not as single theories, but as sets of theories, interlocking with the principal ones?

And so widespread is the theory that the contest is one between men and women, that of the hundreds of books that appear on the subject of woman's oppression, only occasionally is there one that does not attempt to take sides with woman or against her, and against man or with him, on the basis that the struggle is

primarily one between the sexes.

"I seem to be abusing men rather than women," wrote John Macy in his book, "About Women."

"Woman was the first slave; she may be the last master," thinks Ralcy Husted Bell, in "Woman From Bondage to Freedom," and this seems to summarize the attitude of a definite section of the population.

According to this opposition sex theory, life is a sort of perpetual seesaw, in which opportunities and fairness to men decrease as opportunities and fairness to women increase. One sex cannot be praised without the other being degraded; we cannot run women up without running men down; and we cannot be a friend to women without being an enemy to men.

Also, supposedly, there is a definite, fixed amount of justice in the world, and women cannot have some of this exhaustible supply without men having less. Overlooked is the plain fact that there can be no injustice in equality, that there can only be injustice in inequality.

One of the tenets of the opposition sex theory is that men and women are natural enemies, always have been, and thus this enmity having been founded in nature, they can never be friends.

Persons holding such opinions have been trained in the thought that unless men rule women then women will rule men, therefore the notion that men should rule women finds many adherents.

Yet, they can visualize a household where two adult women of approximately the same age live peaceably together and where neither rules the other, but are equals, and share alike, or a household where two men live similarly, but to think of a man and woman living together with neither dominating, nor being dominated, somehow appears incomprehensible.

Motion pictures show by indirection and inference how nice and sane it is for the husband and father to rule the household by showing how miserable it makes everyone when a woman

becomes a household tyrant.

There are two main effects from the theory that man causes all the trouble. First, the oppression of woman is admitted and men are declared to be its originators. Then those who advance this argument frequently turn around and attack the idea that men could possibly be so constituted as to inflict anything quite so degrading on womanhood, therefore they declare her oppression is non-existent.

By setting up a false base as being the cause of the situation, then by disproving this base, they attempt to disprove the existence of the situation.

After that they may hasten forward in great indignation and attack women for being unfair to men, and feeling resentful toward them. Men, they declare, are being abused and mistreated by petty, nagging, selfish women for no reason at all.

They exaggerate the attack out of all proportion to its importance, and declare it is woman's unjustness to men that is the cause of any misery she may have. Men begin to develop an injury complex, and women turn their attack on other women and blame them for the ills of womankind.

The general result has been that man has been pitted against woman, and woman against man until there is confusion on both sides and many women are bewildered over what is the cause of this artificial antagonism and what to do about it all.

Adding to the general confusion is the theory, quite widely held, that subjugation in general is not planned, or directed to any degree. This has stood in the way of woman's predicament being better understood in circles where a complete understanding of her situation would have aided her the most. For if there is no conspiracy on the part of economic overlords to perpetuate subjugation in general, logically there is no conspiracy to perpetuate it in the case of particular groups.

A great many things contributed to the acceptance of this theory

of economic mechanism.

Since the method of production depends upon the totality of competing owners, production is chaotic, slipshod and haphazard, and there is seemingly no common meeting ground where the exploiters may plan unitedly, but instead an everlasting battle ground.

But they do possess a common meeting ground, that of subjecting a population. In this they are not in disagreement. In this they demonstrate their solidarity.

And certainly the exploiting class has the facilities for spreading its ideas, some of which are elaborate systems of philosophy formulated by persons who have had a long training in fraudulent propagandizing. They have been schooled in trickery and possess a full knowledge of the various means used in ruling subject populations in the past.

## VII

### *The Class Basis of Woman's Subjection*

OBSERVING THAT THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN extends beyond the jurisdiction that men have over women of their own households, and observing that here is a social process that could not have been established by unrelated male strangers, bound neither by cohesive plan nor organization, advocates of the man versus woman theory cast about for new arguments to support their theory. They found a very confusing one in the claim that man oppresses woman through the State.

This is confusing, because it is through the State that the subjugation of woman is legalized, and hundreds of laws are enacted which bind her to an inequal status. These laws establish her status as that of a subject, and define man's duties toward her and his duties to the State in performing his dominant role.

If we inquire how this came about we are likely to be told that it happened during the time when men alone voted; when disfranchised woman had no voice in affairs of State.

And while here at least would be a means of effecting a cohesion between males, the premise that men, without class distinction, legalized the subordinate status of woman happens to still be untrue.

*The subjugation of women was legalized during feudalism, when the vast majority of men had no vote and no more to say about their lives than women had. Then when capitalism overthrew feudalism and came to dominant power the subjugation of woman was legalized by the new capitalist State during the time when the majority of males and all women were disfranchised.*

Thus it is evident that the legalization of woman's subordinate status was not the act of men; that middle class men didn't

legalize the relatively lower status of middle class women, nor did working class men legalize the relatively lower status of working class women, nor did all men collectively legalize the subordinate status of all women collectively.

Instead, the binding of woman to inequality by law, was the act of the men of a numerically small class that was so powerful economically and politically that it could pass and enforce laws harmful to the majority of the population.

We hear a great deal about how tradition binds woman to inequality. We hear about woman's "traditional" method of work, and her traditional this and traditional that, until one might conclude that the only pressure on her to conform, are past practices of having conformed.

The subjugation of woman has a long evolutionary background and a great many aspects of the problem are clear only when this background is taken into account. However, her subjugation does not exist because of this background, but because it has a very practical use right now, today.

The repeated legalization of the subjugation of women by a minority owning class, coming to power by acts of violence, as during the English and French Revolutions, was not the result of cultural lags, nor of customs carried over from one regime to the next. The new owners outlawed the institutions of the old and then set up and legalized the kind of laws needed for their interests and to fit the new method of production.

Thus with the revolutionary overthrow of feudalism by capitalism in various countries, profound changes were made in the legal enactments affecting woman, binding her anew to subjugation.

Yet a striking similarity exists between all these different methods and the old feudal codes, because the purpose remained always the same, the drive for wealth, for profits.

Later in this work we will trace certain of these changes, and

their causes, in more detail and show their relation to present day subjugation, after we have cut away some of the cultural undergrowth that prevents a clear view of the matter.

For the present let us examine a little more critically the relationship between men and women both in the family and as competitors for jobs in industry, to see if there exists anywhere a sound economic basis for conflict that outweighs the benefits which they could achieve by social unity.

The first important male that appears in a woman's life is her father. How can the granting of equality to her, hurt him? He has been cast in the role of her protector. What better protection and saner life could she have than the assurance that society has established a definite place for her that does not depend upon his ability to provide?

Life is so arranged today that no one can guarantee another perpetual economic security, no matter how well loved, nor how great the wish to protect and provide for them.

And if he takes up the function of doing her thinking what happens to her when the thinking part of her life dies? On an average she has a life expectancy of many years after his death. Yet the head dies while the body lives on.

The situation between husband and wife parallels in many ways that between father and daughter. The husband has to think not only of providing for his wife and children under conditions which will permit him employment necessary to their support, but he has to think of what they would be faced with in case of his unemployment, or death.

Under the best conditions now possible, where the husband has employment and is able to support his family, the cultural inequalities under which women live adds no pleasure to his life, and under less favorable conditions they become a positive handicap to him.

What about brother and sister? What does a man gain for

himself by insisting that the inequalities to which women are subjected be applied to his sister?

He has his own life to live, and the situation would be very unusual even if he wanted to be burdened by supplying her with a living, to say nothing about his ability to do so. In his plans for her he is almost certain to consider only part of the important factors which go to make up her life.

Or, consider son and mother. A woman old enough to have a grown son needs equality as much, if not more than younger women. She talks less about the discrimination she experiences, but she feels it more keenly, and, wise from the experience of living life, she knows that dependence upon a son is not the best for either herself or her son. Often it will mean the difference between whether or not he can marry.

Mothers of whatever age need economic and social equality not only for themselves but for their children. The greater woman's insecurity the greater is the insecurity of her dependents.

It is untrue, as sometimes claimed, that the security of a mother is something that can be traded in for the security of her children, or that her security would mean their insecurity.

Nor can we find any reason for supposing that a woman's distant male relatives, or the other males she meets as friends, mere acquaintances, business associates, or strangers to whom she never even speaks, and that large group of men whom she will never meet, will be harmed in any way by society extending to her full equality, or by the abolition of the discrimination against women. Yet, the theory that the men of these various groups will be harmed, if this is done, is persistently propagated and does women much harm.

Furthermore, the scarcity of jobs is used by unscrupulous employers to create hostility between men and women and then to lower wages and working conditions just as it is used to set native against foreigner and white against black. But there is no solution

to job inadequacy by following this line.

The fascists in Germany launched a drive against women, to give their jobs to men. They put men to work at the wage paid women, and in some cases even lower. But they in turn reduced the pay of women still further, for they used this campaign against women to work them cheaper than formerly and in addition, 3% more women were employed after three years under the fascists than before they started their drive to not give jobs to women.

A further illustration of the process of playing one sex or racial group against another is contained in the economic and cultural status of poor white men and women workers and farmers of the South. They are called "white trash," which shows how low their living standards have become as a result of disunity arising from race conflict.

Race subjugation is used to lower the wages and increase the rents of the Negroes and then their competition is used to lower the wages and increase the rents of the poor whites.

So we see through a similar process how the hour and wage drive against women is just one way that it benefits an exploiting class for women to have a subordinate status to men without it benefiting men, *and how a low status for women does not mean a high status for men.*

It is, then, the low status of women that is of primary importance to take into account. After that, to take into account that, because of woman's economic dependence, primarily men and secondarily women are enlisted and trained to hold women to this subordinate status.

The misnamed "war between the sexes" has many of the characteristics of race conflict between black and white.

But the "war between the sexes" has invaded the home and for this reason there exists not only conflict between unrelated men and women, but the added complexities arising from intimate group relationships.

The preparation of men and women for the respective roles they are to play in adult life, in this sham "war between the sexes," begins in early childhood.

Thus there is laid a foundation in human behavior that is made the basis for a claim of "natural" antagonism between the sexes and of their complete and total unlikeness.

## VIII

### *Manufacturing Femininity*

**T**HERE IS NO EVIDENCE that woman's biological function as a childbearer reacts on her mental processes in such a manner as to fit her better to become a chambermaid than an engineer. What evidently does react to produce more women who are chambermaids than engineers is not woman's nature, but her environment.

Women are influenced by their physical surroundings, both as members of society and as members of a particular group in society which, in general, has had a particular kind of work allotted to it. It is natural that they should so react, and there is nothing here about which to object, except the kind of work women do.

But, women, like members of other subject groups, such as workers and Negroes, have had part of their behavior cut to a particular group pattern and forced upon them, often from birth.

These groups react to this purposely made environment in much the same manner as certain varieties of grapes when exposed to dry heat, turn into raisins.

Deliberately manufacturing characteristics by this artificial process is neither more natural nor mysterious than the deliberate manufacture of sauerkraut. All that is necessary to do is take certain elements and do certain things with them.

In making kraut, the cabbage is shredded, or chopped, then packed into a wooden container with alternating layers of salt and cabbage. The cabbage is pounded down and a weight is added to keep it submerged.

To manufacture femininity, about one minute after a baby is born you determine whether it is male or female. After that has

been established you are ready to begin, for there are already set up and operating two well defined sets of rules to guide you. One governing the conduct of males, the other that of females, and the attitude of persons toward each. So, if the new baby is a girl the making of femininity begins at once. If a boy the making of masculinity starts.

Little boys are trained to be confident and independent; little girls to be cautious and dependent. Boys are taught that they can achieve their ambitions; girls that they must have some one achieve their ambitions for them.

He has toys and games designed to cultivate his intellect. She has playthings to develop her emotions. He is taught to build a tower. She to pin on a diaper.

He must be daring and brave; she restrained in deportment, meek and submissive. Little girls must grow up to obey and follow men. Little boys to command and lead women.

If it were just a matter of training a child to live life, one set of rules would suffice for all children, because all children have to be taught to live life.

But, instead, we find that boy and girl rules are made to serve an altogether different purpose than teaching a child to wash its hands, blow its nose, wipe its feet, keep away from fire and out from under automobiles, or anything else making for survival.

Neither are they ethical rules covering such necessary social training as sharing one's apple, or toys, or coming to the rescue of another in danger, or playing fairly, because these things apply to children of both sex.

The two opposite sets of rules, into one of which every baby is inducted before it can walk, talk, see, hear or think, have only one purpose. To regulate the relations between subject group and overseers.

To this end, rules which govern him are calculated to bring out and emphasize those traits useful to a petty strawboss and

submerge and atrophy those traits which would interfere with the successful pursuit of such a role. To this end also, rules taught her are calculated to aid him in a successful consummation of his strawboss rule over her.

In view of this training it is rather absurd to say that women have less brains than men. If men are smarter than women, then the dumbest man is the mental superior of the most intellectual woman. The dumbest male has maleness and if maleness is made the measure by which we estimate intelligence then the rest necessarily follows.

Say women are smarter than men and you merely reverse the rule. Femaleness is made the measure by which we estimate intelligence and if we should insist on this measure it would label the most stupid female the intellectual superior of the most brilliant man.

How illogical to insist on attaching particular sex characteristics to the human brain. Negroes come in for the same sort of discrimination. A mulatto writes a brilliant book. Some newspaper reviews attribute his skill to his white blood.

This is often carried to the extreme of insisting, when there is no evidence or proof that a Negro who excels has any white blood, that he must have a little, for it is said to be hard to always know, or be sure. So they insist that brains not only possess sex but color and race as well.

The surprising thing is not that woman has achieved so little, but that she has accomplished so much, handicapped as she has been by her training. One reason she has escaped to the degree that she has, is because those who make the molding rules do not have complete control over the manufacturing environment.

Those nearest and dearest to her were assigned the task of crushing her spirit and arresting any tendency toward independent thinking. The task has been a repulsive one and they have not always done it well.

Then, too, children's resistance has helped to save them from the full effects of this training. It has been said that a child is a natural rebel. Certainly they know many times when something that their trainers insist upon is harmful to them, and they not only disobey the socially conflicting sex rules on occasion but often contest them verbally and give logical arguments why they should not be applied.

One other factor operates in woman's favor. In addition to complicated housework, embodying some twelve or so kinds of skilled and semi-skilled work, she has other tasks to perform, such as teaching, keeping books, answering the telephone and holding her own with tradesmen, who on occasion would cheat her. For these necessary tasks she must have an independently functioning brain, and it is impossible to keep her from using this brain to solve her problems embodying survival and escape.

Yet, it is not merely woman's restricted work and the peculiar manufactured "feminine" characteristics that causes all the trouble.

Women, like members of other subject groups, have been slandered and charged with weaknesses and faults which they do not possess, but which it is convenient for the subjectors to have believed about them.

Human nature, manufactured characteristics and falsified characteristics have all been lumped together and labeled feminine nature.

A woman who several years ago gained much publicity from lecturing on the subject of sex expression and repression, makes the charge in the published story of her life that women are to blame for their subject status.

Her indictment is based on the theory that women, as trainers of children, could wipe out in one generation the discrimination against women, merely by teaching their children to have theories of equality and freedom toward women.

Woman's children can unquestionably be a vital factor in her

emancipation. But, to expect them, as this woman does, to do the job alone is to pit them against an entire economic and social process, armed only with an idea about a single issue. They would be unaided by their fathers, and have only the coaching of women to guide them.

Furthermore, her estimate glosses over the fact that in the training of children, it is not just women who train just children, but subject women who train subject children, and back of these women are successive generations of subject parents.

This does not mean that these subject parents did not pass on training and traditions from their struggles to their children that are helpful to them, for they did, but they also passed on theories of the subjectors, who had laid their cuckoo eggs in the parental nest.

Boys and girls, today, are not trained by their parents into such strikingly different patterns as they were, say thirty years ago. This modification of the training of children came as a result of the people attaining a fuller, more rational life. With their increased economic and political power they were able to resist the most oppressive measures applying to their children and themselves.

However, if we should have fascism, or black reaction, in the United States, the training of children will return to its old repressive forms.

## IX

### *"Don't Beat Your Husband"*

**T**HE TRAINING BOYS AND GIRLS RECEIVE to mold them into upper and lower economic and social castes along sex lines, is continued in adult life. Furthermore, there is insistence that woman play her role, irrespective of belief in her inferiority.

In "Brainy Wife Too Much For Him," Hearst's Los Angeles Examiner, Sept. 18, 1934, the late Winifred Black intimated that the road to Reno is paved with the broken hopes of women who failed to play this role:

"Yes," said the woman who had just come back from Reno, "yes," that's exactly what he said to me just before I started to get the divorce, he said 'I'm tired of looking up, my neck aches and I want to look down' . . .

And when the woman from Reno had gone I got to thinking about how strange it is that men like to look down and women like to look up. I don't believe any marriage can be happy when a woman is braver and more honest and more generous and more intelligent than her husband, not if he suspects it.

No decent man can bear to be patronized by his wife, but a lot of very decent women simply love to be patronized by their husbands.

It's all sort of queer and puzzling, isn't it?

It is significant that a Hearst writer preached the same slavish doctrine for women in 1934 that was given in its essentials by an English Doctor in 1774:

"Be ever cautious in displaying your good sense," wrote Dr. Gregory, "if you happen to have any learning keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts or a cultivated understanding . . ."

"A Father's Legacy to His Daughter,"

From "Woman In Subjection," by I. B. O'Malley

In "Don't Beat Your Husband," Ladies Home Journal, Feb. 1938, Duncan Norton-Taylor, points the same lesson and tells

how a fictional heroine, because she excelled her betrothed, lost him to a silly woman, "with a dog-like face."

The misguided girl managed to marry, only to discover during the honeymoon trip that she was on the verge of losing her husband because she beat him at tennis.

Acting in the nick of time she staged a fake runaway, by putting her lighted cigarette on the horse's rump, and after her husband rescued her she pretended that she had been too frightened and incompetent to think of picking up the reins and stopping the horse herself. This pleased him so greatly he didn't leave her after all.

What a lot of enmity has been generated between men and women by such theories. If there is any real basis to the wish to excel another, that wish must surely be sexless. It would be a desire to excel not men especially, nor women particularly, but merely to excel persons.

Yet, it is not enough that a wife act inferior to her husband. The use that can be made of the husband's economic power over his wife in the attempt to train her in dog-like subservience to his friends, on the claim that this pleases the husband, is illustrated by the story, "How To Make Your Husband's Friends Like You," by Dale Carnegie, Pictorial Review, April, 1937. He tells how a bachelor who owned a Boston bulldog married, but, says Mr. Carnegie:

"It didn't take long . . . for word to get around that Mrs. A. was not very popular with her husband's friends . . . but the dog remained popular with everyone.

"Stop and think, occasionally," he continues, "why your husband married you . . . He married you because he wanted you to bring happiness into his life . . . The next time you meet one of your husband's friends remember that he is ten thousand times more interested in himself and his problems than he is in you and your problems. Remember that his toothache is infinitely more vital to him than the civil war that is ravaging Spain. Disraeli . . . said: 'Talk to a man about himself and he will listen for hours. . . . Try Disraeli's technique . . .'"

We hear such theories expressed so frequently that we are likely to become dulled to their effect upon both men and women, so let us transpose the roles of husband and wife and the degrading effect upon both parties is at once apparent:

"We begin with a woman and her Pekinese pup. She married, but her husband wasn't especially interested in some of her friends and he became unpopular, but the dog remained popular with everyone.

"The next time you meet one of your wife's friends remember she is ten thousand times more interested in herself than in you and if you adjust your conversation accordingly she will talk to you for hours about herself, or listen to you talk for hours about herself.

"Say nothing about Spain, for disaster will befall you if you do not narrow your interests to suit the likes of shallow, petty persons."

Would Mr. Carnegie have been able to sell such insulting advice, "How To Make Your Wife's Friends Like You," to a magazine published for men?

Steeped in such ideology and conforming to it, how could a woman act in a courageous or independent manner in reference to the political and social issues which confront her? How could she do otherwise than react fearfully and cringingly toward her husband, and be a handicap to him when he wants to take his rightful place in such activities?

A woman who is unable to throw off such debasing theories is unarmed and helpless before the pressing problems which face her and her family today.

Both men and women would be benefited if some of the things instilled into their minds from babyhood were eliminated, such as the notions that man is exalted in the exact ratio as woman is degraded, and if a man has a smart wife, that makes him stupid and she must therefore pretend to be stupid so as to not shame and discredit him.

Propagandists insist that she should not let him know that she is branding herself unfit to please him, telling her that he won't like it if the process is called to his attention, but that if she

doesn't do it he won't like that either. In fact he will dislike it so much that he will not marry her, or live with her, or want her around.

How many men fit into this concept, and to what extent they are actually influenced by it, is impossible to determine, but it is very evident at times and we see traces of it in many individuals whom we meet.

Yet, in this connection, we must not overlook the fact that men and women are baited into antagonistic attitudes toward one another. A man is told that women demand that men dominate them and that they will not respect him unless he does.

A woman does not want to hurt the man she loves and when he is trained to feel humiliated and injured if she does not humiliate herself, she often prefers to go through with it rather than injure his feelings.

But, whether she plays the role of a moron willingly or unwillingly there is piling up festering resentment over the whole process which breaks out in some form. Some people may decree that the earth is flat, but the earth's rotundity will nevertheless affect all people.

If woman's subordinate economic role to man were eliminated, there would be discontinued her subservient role as a listener and yes, then what would undoubtedly apply between men and women, would be the same sympathetic interest and courteous attention that good useage now dictates between men and men and between women and women, conditioned in all cases by the degree of intimacy between them.

## X

### *"Hat-in-hand-me-too-boss" Women*

**W**E FREQUENTLY SEE the charge that women are the worst enemies of women. But we have yet to see this claim made by anyone whom we could consider to be a friend to women.

The fact is that it would be highly dangerous for women to think that they could depend upon all women to favor equality and justice for women. But to claim that women are their worst enemies is as false and misleading as to claim that all women are the friends of women.

The worst enemies of women are neither men nor women, but a class, of which Hearst is a very representative type. This class has by no means given men a monopoly in oppressing women.

On the subject of woman's past and present status, Elsie Robinson, in Hearst's Los Angeles Herald and Express, September 13, 1934, wrote as follows:

I know, sisters, we all lived in harems once, and were sold on slave blocks; but, after all, weren't things chancey for both sexes in those rough and tumble days? Did even men have easy pickings? Did we actually object as much to those harems and slave blocks as we say we did? . . .

I'm warning you, sisters, we're pushing the racket too far! I'm a female myself, and as willing to demand dividends for imaginary wrongs as the rest of us; but we simply can't go on having all these lovely new privileges and opportunities and yet make them think we're shackled slaves.

There was never a stage of society when all women lived in harems, in fact relatively few women have lived in harems.

The majority of women are subjected as workers and the environment of a harem is not suited to the performance of tasks of toil, but is ideal for confining sex slaves, who are to all effects prisoners.

These prisons for women are most successfully maintained by men of the wealth and social philosophy of William Randolph Hearst, whose "American Magazine," part of the Sunday papers of the Hearst chain, ran stories in which the brutal and gruesome murders of harem slaves were described in a joking, wise-cracking manner.

According to Elsie Robinson's argument, women couldn't have been so badly off back then, because it's a cinch that men weren't sitting pretty.

Just as "labor in a white skin cannot be free as long as labor in a black skin is in chains," so labor wearing pants cannot be free as long as labor wearing a skirt is bound.

Because of this it would be quite impossible for the majority of women to be oppressed without the majority of men being also oppressed, since the key to oppression is exploitation of labor, and the shackles of one binds the other.

The situation of women joining the enemies of women is not peculiar to this group alone, but happens to all subject groups. The pressure is terrific and some of them try to escape by joining the pack against the rest.

Others are mercenary writers or conscious betrayers for a price. Even nations do not escape. America had its Benedict Arnold; Spain its Franco.

Several years ago the brilliant Negro labor leader, A. Philip Randolph, then editor of "The Messenger" magazine, helped popularize the phrase, "Hat-in-hand-me-too-boss-Negro" to describe a certain type of servile Negro. Subject women have their Hat-in-hand-me-too-boss-women.

It is, of course, well to know these things, but it is also well to keep this knowledge in its proper relation to the main issue, and to be able to tell when those who point it out are doing so in a manner to expose the real role of such women, or whether it is merely done to slander women, by implying that all women are

like this, and that this traitorous tendency is a feminine trait.

Perhaps there are relatively few women who do not feel some unifying bond between themselves and other women, because of the discrimination levied upon femaleness. Aside from this bond of misery that they share in common, it would probably be easier to train women in hostility to other women than it would be to train men and women to fight.

It is natural for men and women to adore one another, and the subjugators and their agents have not had an easy task in their attempt to make men and women hate one another and like oppression instead.

Two frequent indictments of woman are that she cannot be depended upon to keep her promises and is incapable of sustained efforts. These traits are not applicable to all women, nor to any woman all of the time, and to the extent that they exist are clearly traceable to her second-hand status and way of making a living.

The vast majority of women are without property and have been denied the use of the earth except on the terms of those who claim title to it. Creators of social wealth, or performers of indispensable social services, they are nevertheless paupers and must seek their bread largely through the charity of another.

Women forced to seek their living in this way cannot escape some of the environmental effects which go with the practice, and must often resort to creating sympathy and shaming some one into helping them.

And as for keeping promises, often the woman is not the one who breaks them, but those over her. She cannot make a decision without always running the risk of her immediate economic overlord, her husband, father, or brother, vetoing that decision. Not alone does this apply to personal intimate matters, but to formal social activities and business affairs as well.

Two things work against woman's sustained efforts: the nature of her work; and the fact that all her life the important decisions

are made for her. She hasn't a dream that somebody doesn't ferret out and destroy. She is ridiculed, told "What can you do?" "You are crazy."

If a wife does not believe in her husband's ability, does not encourage and comfort him, she is considered the worst sort, and it is claimed that no man could go far with such a crushing handicap.

Should she go still further and actually disbelieve in him, or consider him of low mentality, and tell him so, then it is sufficient alibi for his failure in everything and he can become surly and bitter with justification.

All through life the average man has encouragement. It begins with his mother. Her hopes for him and her confidence in his ability to do something worthwhile. Society in general has confidence in him and tells him so in many different ways, but the woman has little encouragement of any kind.

If some member of her family should believe in her there is still left society; a society which lacks confidence in her, pays her lower wages for the same work as a man and calls her a fool. Men should be encouraged. Women also need encouragement.

It has been cited in an effort to further discredit woman that she nowadays has a great deal of leisure of which she makes no good use. Wherever one has leisure it resembles the leisure of a penitentiary.

Most women who do not work outside the home have their time so divided by household tasks that these scraps of time, odds and ends of leisure, are inadequate for the purpose of doing work requiring considerable concentration.

Important creative work requires a great deal more time than that consumed in doing the actual work. One needs a certain amount of time to get in tune, and how can one become attuned to any one thing if they have dozens of small tasks intruding, demanding time and consuming attention?

Housework, as at present performed, is perhaps the least satisfactory, and its results the least cumulative, of any work. Does the woman wash the dishes, cook and sweep? In a little while these tasks will be to do over again. Before the washing is on the line the next week's washing has commenced to accumulate. These deadening, repetitious tasks surge in upon her with the regularity of the tides.

Almost no woman who has to do housework can permit any other interest to take first place. Yet, just as men who succeeded in doing something they wanted to do, have found it necessary to concentrate on the job at hand and keep their brain clear of trivial matters, so will women who succeed find the same thing necessary.

It is often the boast of men that they never take up their time or burden their minds with petty, cluttering details. Woman's life is largely made up of such things.

Women, like all subjects, are condemned by their critics and forbidden to change.

## XI

### *Pebbles in Our Shoes*

**A** NEGRO LIBERAL (I believe it was Walter White) writing about the oppression of his people, compared minor acts of injustice to small pebbles in their shoes. While not the most important phases of the Negroes' lives, they had no small share in making life decidedly unpleasant.

There are a great many phases of woman's life like that. They are not important like her main economic problem is important, but they contribute to her general unhappiness.

Some of these questions are not even live issues today, but are things which women struggled for in the past, such as for a better method of dress, and a name of her own, and the right to speak in church, or the right to divorce. But, even though they are not immediate demands they are important as part of the history of the woman's movement.

We appear to have become a little ashamed of these questions and fear to mention them lest somebody criticize us on the basis that there are more important matters to talk about.

However, the opposition does not forget, nor are they ashamed to keep pounding away on these issues, and then one fine morning we wake up to the fact that a swell liberal writer is disturbed about the scantiness of Hollywood women's clothing in somewhat the same fashion as an old fashioned religious bigot.

And another man who writes stirring pieces about workers, appears to have acquired the bourgeois philosophy about women in a well rounded out form. He deplores divorce; thinks the way to handle family disputes is for the man to break some dishes; says prostitution is a fact and we can be neither for nor against it, and the reactionaries' attempt to keep married women from work-

ing for wages has him all tangled up.

While neither woman's dress, nor divorce are live political issues as they once were, still any liberal who wishes to write on these subjects should find something to write about in attacking the lags in these fields.

In the matter of attire, the lags in headgear and footwear are quite noticeable. In New York state it is still possible to get a divorce if one of the partners is unwilling. But if they agree together to get a divorce they can't have it.

Before a woman could swing a tennis racket in a pair of shorts, her limbs had to be freed from dragging skirts and the minds of both men and women had to be freed from the notion that it was immodest for women to actively participate in sports.

And woman's modern clothing, especially sport clothes, play suits, sun suits, bathing suits, shorts, slacks and the plain street costumes called sport dresses all have the double significance of woman being freed physically and mentally, and have become a symbol to woman of her improved life.

Woman's modified clothing did not come without a great deal of struggle on woman's part. A bitter struggle started in earnest in the 1850's. Women who rebelled against wearing three or four ruffled petticoats, topped by a flounced skirt, which had six inch "dust" ruffles that dragged in the dirt, were charged with immodesty.

Mrs. Amelia Bloomer led the fight for simplified attire by wearing a long divided garment held in at the ankles, covered with a smock-like jacket, and resembling a Persian costume.

She and her followers were jeered at and taunted by crowds wherever they appeared. These women were modest and sensitive and suffered great humiliation because of these insults, but during 1849 and 1850 they courageously kept at the task they had set themselves.

Finally they could bear the abuse no longer and decided to give

up wearing the uniforms, but they had won more than they realized at the time, for the ice was broken at last, and the weight of unnecessary, cumbersome, unwieldy clothing worn by women was slated to go; slowly, but nevertheless go.

Today, slacks especially come in for attack by the same forces who, a few years ago, looked upon short hair as a rather menacing factor, but one which they often emphasized would be only temporary.

James Oliver Curwood, at the height of his popularity as a writer, addressed a plea to women through one of the national magazines to cease cutting their hair. If we remember the words correctly, they were: "Have I not always loved you, individually and collectively, and how can I continue to do so, if you are going to have bristles all over your lovely necks?"

The plaintive cry of Curwood did not halt the march of the snipping shears. Other objectors were less friendly, and after they suffered defeat in that respect turned their attacks onto short skirts and low heels.

Yet, how these persons like to ridicule women for the freakish hats they wear, and their halting, mincing steps caused by high stilted heels which throws the body forward and out of balance. So here again they condemn women, yet forbid them to change.

In the matter of pants, the Chinese women have worn them for centuries, and are considered neither immodest nor unattractive. Certainly this can be said in defense of pants, they conform to the structure of the human body, and for this reason their popularity with women is almost certain to increase. They fit modern life, the automobile, the whole machine age, and woman's wider freedom, and in time skirts will likely go the way of long hair.

Men, likewise, are beginning to show definite signs of preferring clothing different from the conventional dark grey, blue or brown sack suits to which they have been held during the present century by a custom not less rigorous than that which dictated

"womanly" attire for women.

These plain, dark suits have been practical, and there was a lot of mileage in them, so they *suit*ed an economy where so many persons are poor, and where the problem of clothing a family is a major one.

But under a better life this need not be such a weighty factor, and some day man's uncomfortable clothing will go the way of steel bound corsets for women, as will also the practice of wearing coats no matter how warm the weather. And we will welcome the day.

So different were women once thought to be from men that it was believed, even in scientific circles, until 1894, that women breathed differently from men.

Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, in "Woman in the Twentieth Century," tells us that it was in that year that "the doctrine of women's costal breathing as distinguished from men's abdominal breathing was disproved in a Harvard and in a Leland Stanford laboratory."

Of the primary biological difference between the sexes, that men are the fathers of the race and women the mothers, there is nothing to dispute about. But of the effects of these primary differences upon what are popularly called the secondary sexual characteristics a great deal can be said.

Certainly the physical structure of woman is subject to a great deal of modification. Even a brief reflection on the changing modes in feminine apparel and styles of bodily contour will reveal the amazing plasticity of woman's form.

How distorted seems the hour-glass form of an Anna Held, encased in a steel bound corset, when compared to the form of a man. And also how distorted it seems when compared to the unbound figure of an Isadora Duncan.

Broad hips are no longer something every woman must have, for even her wider pelvic arch need not carry a surplus of flesh

and fat, which further accentuates its wideness.

It must be evident to any one who gives the matter serious thought, that the extreme styles for men and women are an indication of the society in which they live, more than their fundamental biological differences.

Yet the widely differing attire of men and women, causing in turn a modification of the bodily structure in the case of woman, has had no small part in supporting the whole ideology about the total and complete unlikeness of men and women.

## XII

### *The Culture of Subjugation*

LITERATURE, MOTION PICTURES and other cultural forms when used to support woman's low economic and social status have both a positive and negative side.

On the negative side there is a deliberate narrowing down of the subject matter and a sorting out of wider issues which would give woman a proper conception of society and the importance of her own role in society, thus segregating her in thought.

The positive material attempts to condition woman to accept her subservient status and train her to conform to it. Much of this matter counseling subservience is interwoven with appeals based on economic expediency and the necessity of pleasing a man and of being attractive to him, so as to be enabled to reach a definite economic status through his favor and invitation.

However, we find on analysis that a great deal of this conduct, said to be pleasing to men, has nothing to do with the wishes of men but represents instead the ideals and interests of an economic class. Furthermore, woman's conformance to such class codes helps to oppress not only women, but men as well.

The masking of class ideology behind the claim that this ideology expresses the true nature of men and women and reflects their wishes, is one of the commonest methods of slandering men and women, and of concealing the origin and purpose of degenerating theories through which persons are trained to conform to subjugation.

For the purpose of illustrating the difference between the codes of the subjectors and the people, let us use the play, "The Women," a 1937 New York hit, published in book form by Random House, and included in "The Best Plays of 1936-1937," by

Burns Mantle. (The motion picture, "The Women," based on this play, has had some of the harsher crudities deleted, but it is still a slanderous portrayal of women, camouflaged as a "satire.")

In this play, Clare Boothe has assembled the basic theories of the subjectors applying to women and added to these cutting gibes after the fashion of middlemen around the sex mart, where sex is a commodity and the ideology reflects the interests of the traders in the commodity.

In the preface to the published play, Clare Boothe defended herself from the critics of "The Women," and sneered at Heywood Broun, who thought that the play "degrades the whole human race." She pleaded women guilty of being responsible for these concentrated distillations of bourgeois morality, and said of the characters in the play: "They are vulgar and dirty-minded, and that they speak . . . with the tongues of fishwives and bartenders, can be laid at the door of good reportage."

Her claims were supported by E. V. Durling, columnist, in the reactionary Los Angeles Times. Under date of January 12, 1938, he wrote of the "cruel revelation of feminine character in this play," and said, "If you, sir, want to get a fairly good idea of what the modern woman thinks about and how, go see the play 'The Women,' due in town next week. This opus, written by a woman, is based on experience . . ."

No confusing, superficial issue that creates social disunity between women, appears to have been missed by Clare Boothe, wife of the publisher of Fortune and Time magazines. In the play, unending competition for a man goes on even after marriage, and special groups of women are set against others. Wives who stay at home are made to feel that women who work in offices are liable to steal their husbands. These women are called "office wives" to give emphasis to the contention.

The thesis seems to be: Woman, think not of other women, either singly or in groups, as social beings with whom you have

important matters to consider in unison, but think only of them as menaces; as hateful competitors, as persons to fear, wrangle with, suspect and attack.

In this play women are indicted for situations which must inevitably arise from their economic dependence upon men, and the necessity of certain women to sometimes attract a man for economic reasons. Yet, economic independence, which would alone make unnecessary these discrediting practices, is likewise presented as being undesirable and something to be avoided.

Women are indicted because they "neither please the men, nor function as child bearing animals." While the beating of women by men is treated as a joke. And it is said that "Practically nobody ever misses a clever woman."

The play favors indissoluble marriage, and one of the characters says: "Damn these modern laws . . . fifty years ago when women couldn't get divorces they made the best of situations . . ."

A woman who is contemplating divorce is advised: "Let him make a fool of you, let him do anything he wants as long as he stays." While the double standard of morals is defended passionately by such widely differing social strata as the rich woman and her daughter's cook.

How do such theories as presented in this play compare with those of the people as expressed by their leaders, and as striven for by individual men and women, on marriage, love, divorce, morals and woman's economic status?

The people frankly see no benefits either to individuals or society in two persons continuing in intimacy when such an arrangement has become odious to them, and have shown unmistakable evidence of preferring divorce to indissoluble marriage.

The people are not cynical and bitter about sex love and are fully aware of its mainsprings of tenderness and creativeness. Yet the people, with their sound, sure instincts avoid the bog of diseased sentimentality in which subjugation writers like so well

to wallow when it suits their purpose.

The people look upon women as useful members of society, doing socially necessary work, and as such, entitled to a direct economic relationship with society and not one depending upon the whim or favor of an individual.

And the people disapprove of both the advocacy and practice of beating, kicking and slapping women and of treating such manifestations as jokes.

Force is necessary in the oppression of any group or class, and part of the force necessary to woman's oppression is that exerted by men. In addition, the advocacy and threat of such force plays no small role in the artificially created hostility between men and women.

Oppression masks behind many aliases, and when applied to women, one of these masks is called love.

Readers who attend the movies have undoubtedly heard the approving gasps when some modern hero strikes the heroine. At the same time there is small doubt that these gentlemen love these ladies dearly. The movies with all their shortcomings are tending in some aspects to treat life as it is.

"Psychology and the Social Order,"  
by J. F. Brown, Ph.D.

Certain motion pictures starring Gary Cooper, where he blusters and plays the strong, stern male, lend credence to the claim that women require supervision by men. There is always a build-up for this by depicting the woman as being weak (as in "The General Died at Dawn") or erratic (as in "The Plainsman"), and every attempt is made to channel interest, sympathy and admiration for the dominant male who puts incompetent, foolish woman in her place.

The German fascist official Goering said that "Woman shall be neither comrade nor beloved," and in the United States this fascistic ideal is evident in many of the motion pictures. In "Rendezvous," the lovers, played by William Powell and Rosalind

Russell, made cruel and sadistic assaults upon one another, and love was depicted as a nettle. In other pictures women are frequently degraded by being kicked or spanked.

We find similar sentiments expressed on the woman's page of the Los Angeles Herald and Express, a Hearst paper, October 5, 1934, in the column "Meditations of A Married Woman," by Helen Rowland, and headed "Love-Taps":

Should a gentleman sock a lady, and how? What is the most popular form of wife beating? And do women really like this caveman stuff and sigh for the good old days when a man's favorite way of expressing his love was to knock the girl friend senseless and keep her knocked senseless for the most of her married life? . . . It is true that down somewhere at the bottom of every natural minded woman's heart there is a longing to be conquered and tamed . . .

### XIII

#### *Overemphasis of Beauty*

**W**HAT TOPICS DO EDITORS of women's magazines consider of first importance to their readers? The Pictorial Review, April, 1937, contained no articles on political and economic problems confronting women, but on the front cover the editors offered "Beauty," by Mildred Cram, to its two and a half million readers as the "most memorable story of the year."

This story embodies a whole negative social philosophy of escape for women. A philosophy that treats social problems of poverty, and of being bound to dull grinding toil, not as problems of society, but as matters only to be solved by the individual woman.

Having preached that all women who are beautiful can escape economic uncertainty, it has been quite easy to implant in the minds of women who are not beautiful that the fault lies with them and that their economic life is difficult because they themselves are defective.

The feverish emphasis on beauty for women is unmistakably accelerated by commercial interests who have cosmetics and beauty parlor services for sale. But certainly this does not account for all, nor the greater share of fiction stories, magazine articles, novels and what not that have beauty as their theme.

And we can find no satisfactory answer in the claim that it is because a woman wishes to appear attractive in the eyes of the man she loves, for men also show evidence of wishing to appear attractive in the eyes of women they love. Yet, it is well known that the quest for physical beauty plays no such role in the lives of men as it plays in the lives of women.

Nor do cosmetic sales managers dog the steps of men as they

do women. There must be a sound reason why men have escaped, as the market for cosmetics and services might easily have been doubled simply by applying the process to men.

Because woman is held to an economic status that is reached through the favor of an individual, who must first find her esthetically desirable, she has been unable to either escape or ignore those who capitalized on this situation to sell more merchandise, or find plausible excuses for her low economic and social status. That women themselves should be charged with responsibility for this entire hectic beauty campaign is entirely consistent with the policy of blaming a subject group for every detail arising out of their subject status.

Health, beauty and appearance are important, and must always be under any method of economy, but subject women, because they live under codes and rules which are predominantly those of the exploiting class, will find that these things are overemphasized, and made to apply where they should not apply. They will find at the same time that economic insecurity and all the things which flow from it, worry, inadequate recreation, a life inadequate to some degree in all its phases, will take a wasteful toll of both beauty and health.

On the subject of love, even more than beauty, women have been deluged with sentimental effusions through magazines, books, newspapers, motion pictures and radio, and here also men have escaped to a degree unknown to women. And here, again, woman's economic dependence upon a personal relationship has made a revolt against this overemphasis of her love life difficult.

In woman's quest for love, as in her quest for beauty, propagandists for subjugation have used a concrete foundation on which to build an artificial structure. Woman's natural desire for a normal love life, plus the close connection her intimate affairs often have with her means of obtaining a livelihood under the present economy, is the foundation.

The artificial structure consists in distorting love out of all proportion to the role it occupies in life, and an attempt is made to so fill a woman's mind with thoughts of emotion that there will be no time to consider and solve her practical problems. Those women who succumb are transported, by this method, to a dream world that is not greatly unlike that inhabited by the drug addict.

Mike Gold, in the *Daily Worker* (New York) once described this phase very well. He pictured a little family living a real-life drama that had more thrills to the square inch than any movie, as its members struggled to survive against their enemies and overcome an adverse economic tide that sought always to engulf them. Meanwhile, the love-doped woman lived apart in her thoughts from the vital issues that faced her husband, her children and herself, in a dream world inhabited by movie stars and radio crooners.

Mike Gold did woman a service by pointing out the dangers inherent in such fallacious escape, and by exposing the process. Contrast this with the attitude of those who seek to oppress women. They attack woman and charge her with full responsibility for this overemphasis of love, yet are careful to never expose the harm it does her nor the fraud of the practice.

Symbolical of a new social awareness, and a growing discontent with this nightmareish attitude toward love, is the following letter, addressed to a professional "lovelorn" columnist, said to have 60 million daily readers, which was published in the November 1937 issue of "*Champion*," magazine of progressive youth:

Dear Dorothy Dix: Thank you for your past favors. Thank you for the code of ethics you have tried to give us. We no longer need your services, because we now have a code of our own.

We want educational and recreational centers! We want economic security. We want authentic advice based on fact . . . And we hereby stand together to face our collective problems—and oh, Dorothy, they are bigger than you would ever let us see before!

Lillian Dangler.

In "Capitalism and Its Culture," Prof. Jerome Davis shows how the press, motion pictures, radio and other cultural forms are used to support the economic system of capitalism.

The cultural means of influencing and molding public opinion are mainly owned by large scale employers of labor who have a direct interest in the maintenance of the present economic system. Furthermore they have interlocking interests with finance capitalists and are also influenced by large advertisers, sponsors of their programs.

And it is into this general pattern of capitalist culture that those theories which distort, mislead and misdirect woman fit so neatly. In fact the pattern is complete only when the part dealing directly with woman is included.

Professor Davis cites a survey of women's magazines (made by Elizabeth B. Schlesinger, New Republic, December 13, 1933) in which "The Ladies Home Journal, The Woman's Home Companion, The Pictorial Review, and McCall's, over a six month period in 1933, revealed not a single major article on power control, immigration, farm problems, economic planning, child welfare, education, the labor movement, taxation or international affairs."

Thus it is not only the things published for woman, but also the things left out that gives to woman that peculiar combination of training and ideology so essential to her continued subjugation.

This situation has been both excused and defended on the claim that women are not interested in social, economic and political issues. Yet we find that this negative program for woman is supported in a very positive manner, and that she is definitely discouraged from seeking information on these subjects and has been ridiculed for taking an interest in political and economic questions. While at the same time false economic theories are injected into everything she reads from love stories to cooking recipes.

## XIV

### *The Culture of Prostitution*

**I**N THE UNITED STATES there are an estimated million commercial prostitutes, who come from all races. They have an economic and social significance that outstrips their numerical importance, for wage rates have become involved, and moral questions effecting all women have been raised.

Prostitution has been laid at woman's door, and it is said that she enters the practice from choice because it suits her nature, and is one of the attributes of Eve. Nor is this all. Prostitution has created its own degenerate philosophy, which has penetrated into circles not directly affected by it.

Persons who acquired their opinions about prostitution from sources such as Mae West pictures, wherein the talented star portrayed the woman of questionable character who went freely about the country having adventures, knowing romance, wearing swell clothes and dominating the situation in which she found herself, selecting carefully her lovers and avoiding those men who did not appeal to her esthetic tastes, in fact a roving, wise-cracking free-lance, exploited by no one, will have the wrong picture of the real lives of such women.

So completely have the vice syndicates brought commercialized prostitution under their control, that the commercial prostitute who has escaped being forced into "working" for the vice lords is becoming increasingly rare. The syndicate prostitute sells herself and turns over to another that sale price, or she is sold by another who keeps all the sale price and returns to her a bare subsistence. As may be surmised, she does not submit to this willingly and the story of the methods used to force her to do

this is not a pretty story, and bears no resemblance to a Mae West picture.

Quite a clear and comprehensive record exists, of how the organized vice interests operate and what their objective aims are. But the record is not as accessible as it should be.

At the Los Angeles municipally owned free library the 70 or 80 books on the subject of prostitution may be had only by permission.

These books have not only been removed from the shelves open to the public, but they are kept locked away in compartments and not even library employees may see them, without permission of the keeper of the key.

The best factual expose of these interests and how they corrupt everything they touch, is still, despite its date, the 1915 published report of the Bureau of Social Hygiene's vice investigating committee, headed by Geo. J. Kneeland, comprising the first half of the book, "Commercial Prostitution in New York City."

The second part of the book containing the Bureau's survey of the reasons motivating the prostitute, fails to utilize the material in the first section. This survey was made by Miss Katharine Bement Davis, Superintendent of the State Reformatory for Women, at Bedford Hills, New York, a prison, where the 621 girls investigated and examined were confined.

The Davis report has a social significance that goes beyond its possible effects upon the lay reader, for it has apparently become the pattern for writers who either do not know the economic reasons for prostitution, or prefer for some reason not to deal with them.

Illustrative of the method used, one chart in the survey gives seven per cent of those questioned as attributing their position to a desire for pleasure. *Food* is listed under "desire for pleasure."

Only 19 of the 621 girls are listed under the caption, "Economic Reasons," while under the caption, "Personal Reasons,"

taking a total of 291, is classified such items as "sick," "needed the money," "easy money," "desire for money," as well as many more which clearly have an economic base.

Miss Davis was a member of the Bureau of Social Hygiene, of which John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was chairman. The only other members were Paul M. Warburg, of the firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., and Starr J. Murphy of the New York Bar.

Having over a period of many months, with several investigators, investigated fifteen hundred and ninety-one places of commercialized prostitution, including parlor houses, massage parlors, vice resorts in tenements, disorderly hotels and assignation houses, the first 162 pages of the book given over to the Kneeland report is an unbroken record of crime.

They record malfeasance in office, misfeasance in office, the robbing of yelling victims while uniformed officers conveniently looked the other way, pimping, procuring, bribery, thieving and disposing of stolen goods, dope traffic and the beating of prostitutes.

Mr. Kneeland cites the furnishing of health certificates to prostitutes who were known to be diseased, by crooked doctors who left cards to be given to the girls' customers who became infected, thus soliciting the treatment of their cases.

He describes a "stock market" where shares of these places were bought and sold. An account is given of real estate agents and their places of business where leases and rentals were dealt in and a detailed description of these law violators and the places where they transacted their various businesses.

Mr. Kneeland speaks of the "judiciary being involved," and records a tremendous battle that is going on between opposing vice interests. One side has some judges and the other side has some judges, and so the play goes back and forth.

Lincoln Steffins in "The Shame of the Cities," published in 1904, gave a graphic account of commercialized prostitution and

its role in political graft. Since then there have been many changes in the institution, yet fundamentally it is still so similar that the record of a vice commission's report on San Francisco in 1937, the "Lucky" Luciano case in New York City in 1936, and the 1938 expose of vice in Los Angeles, and its tie-up with politics, parallel in all essentials the reports of Steffins and Kneeland.

Furthermore, Dr. Ben L. Reitman tells us in 1929, in his book, "The Second Oldest Profession," that the owners of commercialized prostitution are running a business and that, like other business persons, they demand that their employees get to work on time and give their best efforts to their employers.

It is much easier to understand the prostitute, what her life is like, and the terrific economic pressure that turns women to prostitution, and holds them to prostitution, if we first take into account how those who exploit her operate.

Prostitution is large scale business and in profits taken it compares favorably with steel, coal, oil and automobile manufacturing. In many more ways it resembles large scale industrial enterprises. It is organized and managed for the sole purpose of making profits for those who run it, and has been subjected to many of the same changes and adaptations as other institutions run for profit, such as the monopoly and chain store trends.

Twenty-five years ago there was more open buying and selling of shares in these houses by their owners around restaurants and hangouts. Then most any amateur investigator was able to listen in on such a transaction with its customary debate over price, speculations on the possibilities of future profits, relative dullness and pertness of the market and other things having to do with the business.

Today such transactions are on a larger scale, more privately conducted and more nearly resemble the transactions of a closed corporation.

The objective aims of the vice syndicates have been clearly

established, but the same cannot equally be said of the forces which motivate the prostitute.

To counteract the claim that the answer is to be found in economic conditions, and to divert blame from the economic process and place it instead upon these women, a vast literature has been created.

## XV

### *The Prostitute*

**I**T WOULD BE DIFFICULT to find anywhere a poorer group than prostitutes, both when they start and after they have been in it for a number of years.

A great deal of the procuring is done through the medium of newspaper want ads, offering what appears to be legitimate employment.

Having made the contact and having been permitted to ask the girl all sorts of questions, such as age, whether she lives at home, number and kind of closest relatives, their sex and age and many more things which exposes her financial difficulties and gives the procurer a line on her, he selects some from among the ones he interviews who will be most likely to suit his purpose.

Another method of acquiring these girls is to work through some shady employment agency. Where this is done the manager, having a card record on file giving a great deal of information about the girl, is in a position to select and send the procurer those girls in greatest need who are most likely to accept.

There are many more ways of securing these girls and all of them are economic. Sometimes the girl is pregnant, or sick, and the procurer steps in, in the role of benefactor, and puts up the money to get her on her feet again.

A foundation is thus laid whereby she is made to feel under obligation and he makes it a point at first to be especially kind. But most important of all is that she has no place to go.

If she could get work she could earn her living and repay his loan, but she cannot get work. The blacklist works against her, or there is so much unemployment that everywhere she goes there

are dozens for every job.

Since our national economy is based upon the use of productive labor for creating and distributing marketable goods for profit, no matter how badly a person may need a job they have no chance of getting one unless the owner of the job needs a worker.

Factories are not run, jobs are not created, just because persons need the jobs to live, nor to accommodate workers, but because the owner of the job makes a profit. To make a profit he must have a market. No market, no profit. No profit, no job. No job, no worker wanted.

There is always some market, therefore always some demand for workers. Always some jobs in production and distribution, but never as many jobs as workers. Yet everyone who lives must fit in somewhere on this productiveness of labor. A great deal of this fitting in is done by legitimate service.

Yet here again jobs are limited and there are not enough to go around. To blame these left-over millions who could work but who have no jobs would be absurd. Still each individual is subject to being singled out and called lazy, worthless, no-good, because he, or she, has not got a job that does not exist. Each one is subject to being pointed to and reminded, surely out of 40 million jobs, you, just *one* person, could get something to do.

And this is what happens in the case of the prostitute. She is told that with all the jobs in the world she could find something else to do. It even sounds reasonable, if taken up each time individually.

But multiply that one by a million. Quit trying to explain or even understand one, and ask instead where can one million women find jobs, and at once you will see that we have a different problem.

If they are to survive they must get hold of money, a product of labor, to exchange for other products of labor, food, medicine and housing, shoes, hats and clothing, transportation and many

more necessities; yet they cannot find anyone who owns a job who will engage them to do productive labor, or legitimate service.

In order to account for this situation elaborate charts have been made showing the result of examinations conducted amongst these girls, to prove that they are weak minded, weak willed, crazy, lazy, and many more things, all cited to show abnormality of some sort.

These charts tell us practically nothing about the girls but they are startling in what they reveal about the investigators.

Still, propagandists who support subjugation do not always fail to mention the economic basis of prostitution. If they left it out they would not appear so "scientific," so they put it in. But they always weave in a refutation of it, sometimes directly, more often indirectly.

A very harmful and confusing refutation is based on the claim that these girls come from poverty stricken homes where the surroundings are degrading, and this produces degraded girls. Thus they work back to a basis where the girl entered prostitution because she was defective, low, marred in the making.

While thus pretending to discuss the question from a sound economic base, in reality they launch in this way a slanderous attack on the girl and on working class families in general.

Their arguments appear plausible to a great many because no one can honestly deny that workers are in great need of better living conditions. But we do emphatically deny that the conditions under which workers live, unpleasant as they are, make their women who turn to prostitution do so from preference and not from necessity.

Besides, the scope of prostitution is wider than working class women, for by no means are all the daughters of middle class families economically secure nor, for that matter, are daughters from professional and upper class families where fortunes were affected by the economic breakdown.

There is a noticeable tendency in much of the literature on

prostitution to confuse a wanted sex act with prostitution, and efforts are made to show by indirection, or otherwise, that they are either the same or that the former leads into the latter. This is a very effective way of confusing the whole issue, and returning the question to a basis of morality.

We define prostitution as being one or more sexual acts performed for money or its equivalent which would not have taken place if this consideration had not existed.

One of the first lessons about prostitution impressed on the mind of every young girl is that the prostitute is to blame. The girl's statement that she alone is to blame is sometimes injected into motion pictures and stories where it seems to be put in with a flit gun, so disjointed and disconnected is the thought, and so irrelevant to the plot.

In literature defending the present economy, girls are openly attacked for assigning their roles as prostitutes to inability to get work, or to insufficient pay. They are attacked on the basis that such statements are attacks on good women, a slander of good women, by implying that good women would also do these things if faced with similar circumstances, whereas it is said that good women would starve first.

Having not only trained women to think that prostitution has no economic base, and having hounded and terrorized prostitutes who said that it did have, the defenders of prostitution solemnly and learnedly report back their findings that prostitution is without economic implications, because most prostitutes when questioned do not assign such a cause to it.

The foundation of prostitution is hunger. Never forget that for a moment . . . The pimp creates nothing. He only exploits what he finds . . . If he did not find the goods he would not sell them. But he knows where they are made. He knows the mighty factory that breeds the raw material and that factory is Poverty.

Poverty is like a foreign country. Only those who have lived there know anything about it. Other people don't seem even to give it a thought. And when they do happen to say anything about it, they

say the sort of thing they would about a country they had never seen  
... in other words they talk nonsense.

People who have always had enough to eat, and always had a bed to  
sleep in should not be allowed to discourse on what they would, or  
would not, have done had they been poor.

From the book, "The Road to Buenos Aires," by Albert Londres.

## XVI

### *The Pimp*

**I**NSISTENCE ON SEEKING some other answer than economic for the girl's role in prostitution, has led to another error, that of accounting for the pimp as the girl's lover, or even as *her* business manager. And attempts to account for him on either of these bases have led writers on the subject into absurdly contradictory statements.

Only when the pimp is cast in the role as representing the vice baron and not the prostitute is one able to cleave through the contradictory swamp in which these writers wallow.

Dr. Ben. L. Reitman, in "The Second Oldest Profession," suggests that the pimp beats the girl because he despises himself and this outlet assuages his feelings somewhat. Yet, throughout the book runs the theory that the pimp does not despise himself, but instead thinks rather well of himself.

He riddles with ridicule the theory that the basis for the relationship is primarily for sex and he suggests many plausible reasons why neither considers the other attractive. Yet, he writes in other places as though the hold of the pimp on the girl is one of love.

We see everywhere around us the rapacity of those profiting from the exploitation of others; how they never say they have enough but encroach all they can upon those they are exploiting and how even powerful combinations of workers, acting in unison, have to fight desperately to retain any decency at all for themselves.

Observing the greed of these vice lords, we know that they would drive every pimp out of the business or into jail if the

pimps did not serve them and fit into their schemes.

A city estimated to have 25,000 pimps, who have to be fed, housed, clothed and maintained out of the prostitutes' fees would, at an average annual upkeep of \$2,000, make a total of 50 million dollars *waste* to the vice lords. Yet, the prostitute, the most completely robbed, harassed and exploited of all robbed, harassed and exploited is supposed to be permitted to maintain a parasite in luxury, just because it pleases her fancy.

Writers on the subject estimate that pimps have an average of three women each. Cast in the role of "her man" simultaneously to three different women certainly is not a very plausible role. The idea of the pimp as a master lover is deliberately fostered and spread to conceal his real function. So also is the theory that the prostitute has him for a business manager.

He is forced upon her. She takes him or she takes the consequence and the consequence is prison. The pimp serves a useful purpose to the vice lords. He is retail merchant, slave driver, roper and petty contractor all in one.

Take one of these women when she first enters prostitution. She does not operate long until she is arrested. She has not bought "protection." All the furies seem to have been let loose upon her. Word is passed along down the line to her that the way to get by is to take a pimp. He will be the fixer. She does, and there is a noticeable easing up all along the line.

The pimp takes every cent she makes. He even buys her clothes. She is not trusted to do that. She might keep a dollar. If she hesitates to give him all the money, he beats her. This is cited as proof that she is a prostitute because she wants to make money and give to the pimp because she loves him, because he beats her.

Albert Londres, French journalist, in "The Road to Buenos Aires," a story of the traffic in Polish and French girls to South America, relates how a pimp sometimes sells a girl to another pimp without the girl even knowing it until her new master starts

shoving her around. And she cannot help herself. Londres makes that plain.

She is truly a chattel slave. When one ran away the vigilantes hunted her down and returned her to her owner. Yet Londres shows that this is not the only, nor main, binding force which holds her to prostitution. She is held to prostitution as a means of making a living. She is held to chattel slavery, within the pattern of prostitution, to exploit her more completely and drive her to limits to which no one would voluntarily go.

At the public libraries are volumes dealing principally with what is termed the origin of prostitution. The tenor is that it has always been and will always be with us. It is said to be coeval with society. Old as the human race. The oldest profession. It is said also to have had its inception in a very commendable manner, in that it really sprang from a desire to treat the stranger kindly.

A case is built up to show that it originated in hospitality and that the first commercialized prostitution was sacred prostitution. That is what these writers call it. It was sacred because the prostitution houses were religious temples. These girls were not for the use of the local population, according to the theory, which is offered to show that hospitality was the main motive. Nevertheless, the custom was to collect a fee in advance, which would exclude those who were minus a fee, even though they were strangers.

The rich local masters, having their own private sex slaves, would not think the public brothels attractive. A large part of the population was made up of male slaves who were paid no money. They worked for their board. Many of them were worked to death. They were fed out of their master's storehouse.

Slaves did not travel and become the objects of hospitality at religious temples. Travelers had money, and our guess is that any of the local males who could supply the fee were not turned

away. Boys and young men were also kept at these temples for the same purpose as the girls.

For the purpose of keeping the record straight, we must here enter a denial to certain of the popular claims of the origin of prostitution. It is not as old as the human race. It is not coeval with society. It is not the oldest profession. It is not even a "profession." If we list prostitutes with members of professions, thus: doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers and prostitutes, the error of such application is at once apparent.

Prostitution did not start with folk customs. It did not grow out of group marriages between free peoples, for pre-slavery tribes had no such institution. It did not grow out of mystic rites, nor worship of sex. It did not start in any way except by force. It was always a rape institution. Even in the earliest records of prostitution, the evidence shows that the people lived in terrible degradation arising from economic slavery, and did not have the freedom to decide such matters.

If all women had opportunity for socially useful work, the majority of those now living by prostitution would break away from this practice, because it is really very distasteful to them, claims to the contrary notwithstanding.

This was proved in the Soviet Union, after the people of Russia took over the management and running of the country. Unemployment was abolished. Women were not restricted in work except in cases necessary to safeguard either their health or that of their children. The vast majority of women engaged in commercialized prostitution gave it up and became useful members of society.

Those women who were so steeped in the ideology of subjugation that they persisted in the old way, were rehabilitated. They were trained out of these anti-social theories in sanatoria equipped to restore them to health, teach them a trade or some socially useful thing to do, and give them a healthy mental social outlook.

Thus we have in the results obtained by the Soviet Union a practical demonstration of what we had before been able to prove theoretically.

Both as a result of wiping out prostitution, and instituting a method of socialized medicine, where everyone has free medical care, together with carrying on a special educational campaign against social diseases, the Soviet Union is fast becoming rid of these scourges also.

Not only have the people in the Soviet Union abolished prostitution, but wherever the people have come to dominant economic power, even in a part of a country, they have abolished prostitution, for example in the districts in China controlled by the people's movements.

The struggle against prostitution is a struggle against the capitalist class. Since prostitution has an economic basis and the woman enters it because of economic insecurity, one form of the struggle must be economic: demands for a living wage for all women who work.

And for those denied a role in industry or social production, either directly or indirectly in legitimate service, demands must be raised that they be given compensation. Social production in general must be made to bear the responsibility of their support until such time as they can be given a part in such work.

But an effective struggle against prostitution must also attack and expose the whole cynical, decadent moral structure that supports sex subjugation, and the role of sex vigilantes who then dog the footsteps of subject women.

## XVII

### *The Code of a Class*

**M**EN ARE TRAINED to guard women, especially those of their immediate family, and to a considerable extent women not of their family, and women also receive training to act as guards of other women. But in the background of these men and women who function as guards, is a group of mercenary propagandists, novelists, newspaper columnists and speakers. They play skillfully on all the emotions of doubt, fear and jealousy, and make sex feeling in a woman appear synonymous with irresponsibility in sex conduct.

When man helps perpetuate the fraud of woman's subjugation he is assisting in the perpetuation of a fraud against himself, for their interests are so inextricably bound up together that he cannot hurt or degrade her without hurting or degrading himself.

Notwithstanding this, support of enough men is secured to comprise the largest single group that assists in holding women to some form of segregation or isolation. The activities of such men are a great handicap to women, since they wield, because of their position, both personal and economic power over the individual woman, and their activities are felt at home and in general outside the home. Such a man becomes a sort of private policeman for the subjectors.

Theoretically, any man may attain an economic status that makes possible a life that includes a wife and children and a well run household, where he can take his friends and associates. Successful in his business, work or profession he supposedly has all the comforts and almost all the luxuries. In addition he supposedly has the opportunity for full sexual freedom with a large

group of women maintained especially for this purpose, the no-rights group, toward whom he has no responsibility whatever.

There are many reasons why such a method of life is not now, and cannot be, a reality to the majority of men. In a country where the male population has not been decimated by war, the number of men and women average about the same. So how could every man of marriageable age have a wife to whom he had exclusive use and title, yet also have access to a group of women of marriageable age owned in common? Where would these women come from?

In order to have a group of public mates, many men would have to go without private mates. And this is exactly what we have today: a large group of men denied private wives, and restricted to occasional association with public women.

The would-be private wives of these men have been delivered up by the method for public use and thus instead of the exclusion of the use of their mates by other men, there is inclusion and no privacy.

Manifestly such a scheme, under any economy, would be inoperative for all men on account of numerical factors, and would therefore mean the victimization not only of that group of women set aside for public use, but the would-be husbands of these women deprived by this method of wives.

But the fraud involved in the promise of exclusive use, supplemented by unlimited promiscuity, goes even deeper than outlined above. The vast majority of the male population, made up of working and middle class men, have not and can never have, under the present economic arrangement, the means to maintain a family household and support as many persons as this plan involves.

As it is, the average man never has enough funds to satisfy the most elementary needs of his household; money for housing and foods; doctors and dentists and recreation of some sort;

clothing for himself and the expense of at least partly keeping up with constantly changing fashions for his wife, and an unending supply of clothing for growing children. Pocket money is needed for the children to pay for entertainment for themselves and their associates on occasion.

At least some expenditure is necessary for books, magazines, lectures and shows, and an occasional dinner for friends. Gas, water and electric bills, and taxes of some sort, must be paid and daily car fare and other transportation costs met. Besides, a certain amount of voluntary contributions to various funds is inescapable if he is to maintain the good will of those around him.

If his wife does not do all the cooking, house cleaning, laundry work and shoe shining then these are further sources of expense which must be met and nothing has yet been set aside for old age, and no emergency fund has yet been created to take care of unexpected expense, due to accidents, death or a loan to a friend or relative in distress, or for various other reasons which if not observed will lead to spending ahead, or going into debt.

None of these things are extravagant, but are necessary for even a modest amount of comfort and joy. They clamor for attention and first place and the average man cannot even meet them, so where is he going to acquire the money to live a double life?

He may occasionally associate with an ordinary prostitute. In most cases she will not want him, nor will he generally have any special affection for her. And he will have to do this associating in a hidden and surreptitious manner.

The grocer, the real estate owner, or landlord, and various tradesmen will want their money and will not look with favor upon his spending if their pay is not forthcoming. In the event he cannot pay them, they refuse service and he is faced with the clamorings of his household.

He may possibly associate with a woman whom he cares for

and who wants him for himself, but everything will be in league and conspiring to make them miserable.

And he will find that life becomes a round of pretense and hiding if he goes out to collect his double-standard bribe which propagandists of subjugation have led him to believe the present method of woman's subjection guarantees if he will support the method.

The April 1937 issue of the American Mercury makes it very clear from what economic strata males who really are to practice the double-standard are to be drawn. It selects an employer of labor, who has a wife and maintains a household, and associates with obvious prostitutes on whom he spends money, and with women whom he employs and whose labor he exploits, "like pretty Miss Tompkins, who does the filing" in the office.

For these women with whom the husband exercises his freedom of the double-standard, and are considered to be of a lower social class, there is expressed only contempt. But there is also only contempt for the virtuous wife who is of the same social class as her husband, and she is referred to as "chief concubine . . . the matrix of his legitimate heirs."

So, when all is said and done, and the whole theory is boiled down, we get back to the same old formula of Wieth-Knudsen's wherein men are to oppress women and then a small group of rich men is to oppress them all, including women of their own class.

The double-standard is fascism in the bedroom. Even owning class women are treated with contempt and have a status of sex slaves, under the double-standard.

What is the most significant thing about the double-standard? Not that women are restricted, because every time a man has sex relations with a woman, a woman of necessity must have sex relations with a man.

No, restriction of the woman is not the main point, but *punish-*

*ment for her participation*, which participation is unavoidable if he is to exercise his "right." If she is not already an outcast for similar reasons, such participation makes her one.

Now, on the contrary, it is not the code of a man to attack and punish a woman for having had intimate relations with him, or to set the sex vigilantes upon her and have her hounded into the ground. It is the code of a man to protect a woman from such hounding; to shield her.

The double-standard then is not the code of men, but the code of a class. And its asserted restriction of women's sex practices and its asserted non-restriction of men's sex practices, are only a part of this code and not the largest part either, but the framework on which to hang a whole contemptuous philosophy of women.

## XVIII

### *Isolation and Segregation*

**C**ONFUCIUS IS CREDITED with saying as long ago as 500 B. C. that "Men and women should never sit in the same apartment after they reach seven years of age." And, today, wherever women are under subjugation they live in some form of isolation and segregation. Yet, this isolation is not that of a hermit, but of a penitentiary inmate, for it is isolation without privacy.

Women in India live concealed behind the purdah curtain. Millions of women of Asia are segregated and live in women's quarters, zenanas or harems, and many cover their countenance with a heavy horsehair veil, as though their faces were shameful things. Japanese women factory workers are confined in prison-like barracks at the factories where they work. Footbinding, once prevalent in China, but now illegal, was a form of physical restraint. Hot suttee, once widely practiced in India, but now illegal, has been replaced by cold suttee. In hot suttee the widow threw herself on the pyre of her husband, or was thrown thereon by his relatives, and burned to death. In cold suttee she is made an outcast. There are an estimated three million of such outcasts.

In the Latin countries women know the guarding duenna, and in the North American countries, the watching chaperon.

A great many things contribute to the wide variation in physical restraint applied to subject women, but they all key back, directly or indirectly, to the means by which usable wealth is created and distributed.

The footbinding of the Chinese was not practical for women of the working class, for the big toe was bent under the foot at about the age of five, and reaching maturity, these women were

really crippled and could walk or stand for only short periods of time, and then only with the greatest discomfort. So this crippling process was applied to women who either did not work, or to those whose parents expected them to make a property marriage, and became in fact a symbol of physical disability in relation to work.

In the United States, today, if a woman is to live strictly in accord with sex subjugation codes, she must not be alone with an unrelated man on trips, in houses or elsewhere. She must not absent herself from home or travel alone, or at any time be out of sight of some one who knows her, a male member of her family, or a female neighbor or acquaintance, who will function as a guard.

In 1937 adult women still ran the risk of punishment by ostracism, a form of branding as well as a form of coventry, for going out without the guarding chaperon, as the case of Caroline Everington, of the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, shows.

Caroline Everington, U.S.C. co-ed attended a Stanford football game unchaperoned. The faculty was irked and barred her as a candidate to student body elections. But today she was vice-president of the student body by virtue of staunch friends who wrote her name in on their ballots.

"Friends Check Faculty,"  
Los Angeles Evening News, April 10, 1937.

But the use of the chaperon is only a small part of the method of isolating woman, and as there are not enough chaperons in the United States to comply with the demands that are made upon woman to live in a segregated manner, a whole system of restrictive customs and practices is applied to achieve this aim.

Not only are the petty fears and jealousies of men magnified and utilized in this program, but those of women, too. And the woman's jealousy, when aroused, is likely to be two-fold: fear of losing her mate, and fear of losing her economic support.

A certain type of fiction popular with editors of women's maga-

zines plays skillfully on woman's fears arising from her economic dependence on man. Such stories stress the dangers a wife runs of losing her husband to a scheming woman lurking on the fringe of his life, and instruct her in detail how to thwart such attempts. So, a foundation is thus laid for training women to assist in watch and guard duty herself, and in turn submit to being likewise watched and guarded.

It is declared to be a crime for a woman to have sex relations with a man who is not her husband, and on conviction she can be sent to prison. To this extent there is no outward difference between the procedure in this and other acts called criminal.

But the process in the case of women does not stop with the commitment to prisons of those who have been so charged, but also includes commitment to home prisons of those who might possibly in the future be so charged.

In this, the position of woman is unique. Only women are kept in prison on suspicion that they might commit a crime. For the method of guarding and restricting women parallels the guarding of law violators.

However, regardless of the effect all this has upon the woman, the method does not fit the family, nor modern life. It was more applicable to feudalism, when every home was a small manufacturing establishment and a woman could work there a lifetime without a single business reason for leaving the place.

The practice is so onerous and hampering that ordinarily the family enters into a conspiracy to evade the full effects of it. Often, by the conspiring aid of the husband, or mother, or other members of the family, a woman slips out under circumstances not considered proper for her to go forth, and goes about her affairs.

But if any of the neighbors are functioning as sex vigilantes, they must not know. And no one can be sure that they will not so function, such has been their training in this respect. So, a

great deal of explaining, excusing and covering up is at all times necessary.

If the outside guards find out there has been an evasion, or temporary escape, they think the worst, although forced by circumstances to pursue this identical course themselves.

The opposition of the people to this code has resulted in a great deal of modification, for not only is there resistance within the family group, but there is social resistance to it, as the case of Caroline Everington and the students so clearly demonstrates.

But the code may manifest itself to the fullest degree wherever opposition to it is weakest, and the entire family may be punished for laxity in guarding the good, with special scorn heaped upon the head of the house. He is charged at all times with seeing that his women are thoroughly guarded and if he is considered to have neglected to do this he may be ostracized and treated with contempt.

Life then becomes hard for the entire family and if it is not broken up by moving or in some other way, the man may lose his job, or suffer an injury to his business, for at no time is the family free from the fear that economic pressure will be used against them if they do not conform to the rules of subjugation.

It is plain that the worst effects upon women are not in being deprived of sex freedom but in being isolated and cramped by a prison-like existence. It serves the purpose of Jim Crowing women along sex lines and isolating them from men. It creates a sex barrier between men and women and hampers them from meeting together freely to discuss their mutual economic and social problems. It often makes men and women, when they do meet together, unnaturally sex conscious, just as Negroes and whites are made unnaturally race and color conscious, and builds the same walls of strangeness between them.

In "Sign for Cain," a book about Southern life, Grace Lumpkin tells the story of three of the Negro characters who were on their

way one night to attend to some duties connected with union work. They circled the town and avoided roads where they were likely to encounter other people, because they were subject to being stopped and questioned, as Negroes were not supposed to come and go freely at night.

The liberty and freedom of women in the United States has been greatly over-rated. Since the enforcement of these oppressive codes depend partly upon members of the woman's family, there is considerable variation in their application. But where there is the greatest freedom of movement the system operates much as the convict parole system, and where there is the least freedom of movement, it operates much as a prison in reality.

## XIX

### *"Escape" Through Marriage*

**T**HE THEORY OF *individual* escape from *organized* oppression is skillfully spread to both men and women. In the case of woman, escape is offered through marriage. Yet, most women have married and they have not escaped their oppression. But the subjectors have an answer for that.

The woman who has failed to make a marriage that will free her, has failed because she is unfit, or defective, and this leads to their insistence on a measure of fitness that must, by the very thing it is meant to do, exclude the majority of women.

Without criticizing marriage in itself (for men and women had regular forms of marriage before subjugation existed, and will in all probability have regular forms of marriage after subjugation ceases, as that is apparently what they want most) let us nevertheless examine marriage as a means of making a living, and as a means of escape from oppression under capitalism, for it has been especially lauded for both these things.

Therefore our inquiry into the working conditions of housewives, and the means by which their work is reached, is as legitimate as that applying to any other socially useful group in society.

Literature is filled with detailed descriptions of poor but beautiful young women being swamped with proposals of marriage. There is always at least one very rich man yearning to make the heroine his bride.

Even if she marries one not rich, she has always had the choice and refusal of one who is rich. And when she accepts a poor man the reader is given to understand that he is marked for success and wealth later.

There are not a great many young women, rich or poor, considered in relation to the total who are marriageable, who conform to the measure of beauty popularized by literature and motion pictures. But scarce as they are, they are a great many more than the marriageable rich men. So, if each of the beautiful, scarce young ladies is to receive a proposal from a scarcer young rich man, each single millionaire would have to issue proposals to several hundred of these young ladies to make the offers go around.

But slim as are the chances of a beautiful girl attaining the "highest" this method offers, that of becoming a rich man's wife, they are not as slim as her chances of marrying a poor man who will attain wealth.

Because of the process of the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few, the opportunities for the propertyless to acquire wealth are becoming less. The trend is in the other direction.

Even in banking circles strong financial combines are being squeezed out and taken over, or manipulated, by more powerful banking groups.

And so it is in every line of business, whether in production and distribution, or amusements, or something else. The unaided individual is not a power, and it is doubtful if he ever was.

Only economic groups, or combines, exert any appreciable force, and unless an individual can work through these combines, pool his interest with theirs, his efforts are ineffective, for he will find himself pitted against, not individuals, but against economic combines.

Furthermore, the dependent wife of a rich man is a sort of glorified servant to her husband. She does no work. There are unglorified servants for that purpose.

Her wifely task, besides being mate, is to exude charm and serve as a tail to his kite. And while, according to some standards, the kite may fly high, she always occupies a posterior position.

To anyone who is capable of cutting through superficialities and getting to the base of things, her life is far from being an enviable one. Her economic life is insecure and depends upon a continuation of his interest in her, and should he transfer that interest to another, her economic security fluctuates with his emotions.

She is dependent upon another for the very bread she needs to sustain life. Her life is not her own. Her time belongs to him. He is thought to have conferred a great favor upon her by making it possible for her to devote herself exclusively to him.

The great majority of women have always worked, under all systems of economy; have always been useful and valuable members of society, and it is the code of the people that women should work. The people have always looked down upon a woman who was living in idleness and capitalizing a sex alliance, whether that arrangement was legal, or illegal.

So, when we examine the claim that women wish to live parasitically, without working, we find that all women do not possess this "ideal," nor to the extent that it does exist is it held exclusively by women, but we see men also striving to attain such a parasitic status. When all the evidence is in we must conclude that living without work is not a wish peculiar to women, but to a class, and women should not be blamed for it, as though it were a feminine trait.

We sometimes hear a toiling mother say, "I do not want my daughter to have to work like I did." Well, her daughter should not have to work as hard as her mother did, but there is no reason why her daughter should not help to do something about it, and when parents attempt to train their daughters to expect some one else to make a nice world for them and present it on a silver platter, they are injuring their girls and giving them a distorted view of life.

So, it is not a question here of whether a woman should marry.

Every normal woman wants a husband. Nor is it a question of whether she shall work. All women who haven't been corrupted by the ideals of a parasitic class, want to do their share of the work and bear their part of the responsibilities. But, the question is whether it is "ideal" under capitalism for her to reach her work through marriage, and whether she can thereby "escape" economic insecurity.

Marriage, under such an economy as we live today, is necessarily a job for a great many women. Like other job needers, if she cannot get the job she would like she has to sometimes take what is available. But, unlike others when forced to take jobs they do not want, she has to live, eat and sleep with hers.

On the other hand if she likes her husband but not her work, she is stuck anyhow, because she married her work when she married her husband. Women engineers, chemists, stenographers, etc., don't reach their work through marriage. They marry their husbands but not their work.

No other job needer is beset by as many handicaps as a woman seeking work through marriage. It is usually sufficient for any one employing a worker if they qualify for the particular job in hand.

If the mechanic can repair the car, or the tailor sew the cloth neatly and correctly, they are considered to have qualified. It is enough that a man employed to do structural steel work is a structural steel worker, or that a chimney sweep is a chimney sweep.

But it is not enough that a woman be a woman to qualify for what is called woman's work. Only the young and good looking, or beautiful, are generally considered to have qualified. If not pretty she is thought to have cheated and defrauded her husband. He may not be handsome either, but that of course does not matter, because he doesn't reach his work through marriage. Somebody doesn't first have to love him before he has access to his work.

The theory that mating for a living is an ideal situation for women, since most women need a mate and every woman needs a living, conceals that amazing situation in which her basic economic need is made dependent upon somebody's whim and invitation, and placed on the same footing as an invitation to the dance.

A woman must wait until some one asks, will you dine, will you dance, will you marry, will you live?

A woman needs a living all the time whether anybody likes her or not. She may not be young and she may not be pretty, but she must have a living. To make this living, that she constantly needs, contingent upon the securing and retaining of a mate whom she may not need at all, or only part of the time, is to found a necessity upon a relationship that is variable in its existence and inoperative a large part of the time.

There is also reason to believe that a great many women never receive even one proposal of marriage, because of the fact that there are a great many men who are not paid sufficient above their own support to maintain a household and keep a private cook and personal servant, such as a wife is to a poor man. Many men who are employed cannot even afford to eat at restaurants, but have a tiny, makeshift apartment, or housekeeping room, where they cook their own meals and even wash their own clothes.

The theory that every woman can make a marriage forms the basis for turning the attack upon those who do not make such a marriage, and the position into which they are thrown as a consequence, is blamed on them. Has not the nice, good system provided a safe retreat from the cares of the cruel world for every good woman, the haven of matrimony? And has not every woman who fails to reach this wonderful plane failed because she is bad, or defective, or unworthy? "Marriage," wrote Arthur Brisbane, "is woman's finest career."

The picture, attributed to ex-President Hoover, of every man, by being a rugged individualist, acquiring a chicken for every pot

and a car for every garage, became the source of much amusement to the American people.

The picture of woman as the rugged individualist, following the countless Brisbanes pointing to marriage as a means of escape from economic ills, is just as much of a joke, although this absurd myth has yet to meet with the derision that it deserves.

## XX

### *Early Struggles*

**S**o CLOSELY are woman's struggles connected with those of the people, and so closely are the movements of the people connected with those of woman, that we may measure the worth of one by the degree to which it includes the other.

In the United States, woman's struggle for equality and freedom has very definitely been linked with the struggles of the Negro people. In 1840, the women delegates from the American anti-slavery movement to the world's anti-slavery convention in London were not seated because they were women, so women felt the sting of discrimination even while attempting to help other oppressed.

At the time of this controversy, women were beginning to stir restlessly and rattle their chains ominously. Home manufactories producing for market were developing and small factories were springing up, where women were employed at low wages for long hours without being freed from the necessity of doing housekeeping and homework.

They were working fourteen and sixteen hours a day and were legally under the domination of husbands and fathers. It was legal for the husband to collect all of his wife's or child's wages and give no accounting whatever of the money to the wage earner. Susan B. Anthony organized some of these women into a labor union.

During the 1840's and 1850's a woman's movement was being born. The Civil War and all its issues was in the air, and there was a general commingling of the ideas of every group striving to throw off oppression, or to gain greater freedom.

Miss Anthony thought it better to avoid running the risk of driving support away from the woman's movement by injecting the religious issue, and so counseled her close friend and co-worker, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. But it could not be kept out.

Preachers attacked these rebelling women viciously and quoted the Bible to prove it was God's will that men should rule over women. They talked of virgins and Elizabeth lashed out scornfully at the fake purity issue, which she said men had set up to divide them.

The woman's movement contained some active women who were preachers. These women preachers were social rebels and part of their rebellion was against the clergy who constantly attacked them, saying that a woman should not preach, nor even talk in a church, but keep silent.

Elizabeth and Susan both hated slavery and were actively opposed to it, and freedom for the Negro people was discussed and approved in general by the members of the woman's rights movement, women preachers included, before war was declared.

And in 1848, in this setting of general social ferment and upheaval, the first Woman's Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York. In a Declaration of Sentiments, patterned after the Declaration of Independence, it was stated:

"The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world.

"He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

"He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice . . .

"He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead . . .

"In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

"He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of

the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women . . .

"He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her . . .

"He has endeavored in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life."

The sentiments set forth are, in general, so clear as to require no comment. But the last one quoted above, where objection is registered to the process of crushing woman's resistance and "destroying her confidence, lessening her self-respect" and making her submit without objection to an "abject life," is closely related to a resolution, which stated:

"Resolved, that the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance by asserting that they have all the rights they want."

So great was the pressure on woman to conform, her right to protest had to be agitated and fought for, in much the same way as the right of the workers today to join a union of their choice has to be fought for.

And just as the leaders of the workers have had to challenge and expose employers who used oppressive methods to prevent unionization, and who then claimed workers were satisfied, so leaders of the woman's movement in 1848 had to challenge the claims of woman's oppressors that women's inactivity proved they were not oppressed, but content.

And it was because of the necessity to break the hold over women, so that they would even be able to protest, that the support which the woman's movement received from men was invaluable to women, men whose names do not now appear in the records, agitators for women's rights.

Some of these men were leaders, others were not outstanding, but attended meetings and took part in the activities of the move-

ment. They supported it financially and morally. James Mott, husband of Lucretia, presided at the Woman's Rights Convention, and one of the important speakers was Frederick Douglass, Negro leader.

The importance of men's help in a woman's movement has never been fully recognized. They not only give assurance to women, but they are invaluable aids in breaking down the hostility of other men, as they daily come in contact with men who could probably not be reached in any other way.

And there is no better way of exposing the fallacy that the struggle is basically one between men and women, than to see them working together against woman's oppression.

Following the enactment of the Married Woman's Property Act in New York, in 1848, married women in that state at least could own property in their own right. This, of course, was of more importance to women of the propertied classes, although it was not without significance to all married women.

Laws discriminating against women varied with each of the States and this complicated the effort to have them repealed.

The rise of the machine method of production, and the factory system, had far-reaching effects upon the entire population in every country, and women were involved in these effects both directly and indirectly.

The home, the isolated unit, ceased to be a place where women manufactured yardage, garments and countless other articles for the use of the household, and these necessities were increasingly produced outside the home. And with the rise of the factory system it brought conflict not only between the workers and the new owning class, but a clash between the new owners and the old.

The woman's movement supported the Negro people's struggle for freedom, and the Negro people supported woman's struggle for equality. The first legislative action ever taken in the United

States, and as far as this writer knows, the first in the world, giving women the vote, was that of the freedmen in the Georgia State Legislature, who passed, over the opposition of the white landlord bloc in the legislature, a bill enfranchising women.

This was immediately after the Civil War, when Negro men had a part in making laws and before organized counter-revolution illegally, but effectively, barred them from participation in civic affairs.

These former slave men were expressing the democratic will of the people. They acted as spokesmen and representatives of the people and were the most advanced and constructive element in the South on other vital issues, such as the land question, which affected both Negro and white.

Increasingly women raised the demand for the vote. Susan B. Anthony served notice on the authorities that she intended to vote, and they were present when she slipped her illegal ballot into the box and arrested her. Newspapers and individuals heaped abuse upon her head.

In England, John Stuart Mill introduced the first bill in Parliament for woman suffrage. The Suffragettes became increasingly militant, and the Pankhurst leadership in England borrowed some tactics from the Russian Revolutionists of 1905.

Public demonstrations of women demanding the vote spread to the United States, and there was a swelling demand for the enfranchisement of women that was finally rewarded in 1920, while the complete victory was delayed in England until 1927.

In 1937 the Government of the United States issued a postage-stamp bearing the likeness of Miss Anthony, honoring her for the very things for which she had previously been imprisoned and slandered: her militancy in defense of women's rights.

## XXI

### *The Rise of the Women's Clubs*

**D**URING THE ERA of capitalist expansion a numerically large middle class arose in the United States, and the women of this class turned to women's clubs as a means of widening their interests. They developed a new type of woman's movement in this country: a social club movement.

An examination of the programs and activities of the most influential of these groupings of women, reveals potential forces that can be used for woman, or against her.

The Daughters of the American Revolution was organized in 1890 because women were not admitted to the organization of the Sons of the American Revolution. It would seem that the Daughters have had their revenge, for one seldom hears of the Sons, while in 1932 the Daughters numbered 169,626 members in 2,463 chapters, and are constantly publicized in the press.

The most striking thing about this organization is the boast of revolutionary ancestry, combined with its own decidedly anti-revolutionary program. Had the member Daughters lived in the days of the Revolution and pursued their present policy, they would have been the enemies of the very people whose ancestry they now so proudly claim.

In 1938 the D.A.R. erected a tablet at Saratoga Springs, New York, to the memory of Benedict Arnold, traitor to the American Revolution, who when arrested was on his way to turn West Point over to the British.

The organization passes resolutions declaring "controversial subjects of a religious or political nature as being outside its province," and then plunges into the most controversial of political

and social issues.

They consider all ideas about social change to be "Russian," and fear that communism and socialism, in disguise, will get into the schools. Their ideas on this subject read like a Hearst editorial.

They demand that more strict regulations in the deportation of aliens be formulated, which lends support to the campaign to make political belief grounds for deportation.

President Roosevelt in a speech at Washington, April 22, 1938, before the delegates to the 47th Continental Congress of the D.A.R., asked them to remember that they were descendents of immigrants and revolutionists and advocated "inculcating in the boys and girls of this country today some of the underlying fundamentals, the reason that brought our immigrant ancestors to this country, that impelled our revolutionist ancestors to throw off the fascist yoke."

The D.A.R. split, following the honoring of Benedict Arnold, and the barring of Marion Anderson, famed Negro singer, from a public hall in Washington.

The National League of Women Voters was formed in 1920 to take the place of the National American Woman Suffrage Association which attained its main objective when the franchise was granted to women. The new organization was expected to be temporary and function principally in instructing women in their new capacity as voters.

It has, however, continued as a medium of adult education, and was estimated to have a membership in 1937 not in excess of 100,000. Individual units have shown tendencies in many cases to carry on a high type of social activity that goes beyond the scope of the formal program of the organization.

The Parent-Teachers Associations, which claimed a membership of 1,311,203 in 1931, had its beginning in the National Congress of Mothers in 1897. It has a national program of parent educational-training and child welfare, which shows a wide variation

when carried out in its 22,000 units, and bears evidence of swinging sometimes toward democracy and liberalism, and at other times of tending toward reaction.

The Los Angeles Times, just prior to a special election in 1939 at which old age pensions was the principal issue, hailed what it called the P.T.A.'s debut into politics and announced that the P.T.A. would oppose the retirement pension movement, on the grounds that it would deplete the school funds, and also because present pension plans were generous and adequate. If correctly reported, not only was the voice that of the bankers, but it would seem that even the hand was not that of the P.T.A., but of Harry Chandler, boss of the Times.

Some units of the P.T.A. have gone in for thrift banking schemes. Other units have fostered such highly commendable services as the examination and treatment of children to overcome physical defects in childhood, and in 1930 more than fifty-five thousand children were examined. This service might well be extended to include medical and dental examination and care of all students.

County and school nurses have been secured by some of the units, and here also is a service that should be extended to include the entire school system. Other activities of units have included the establishment of libraries, the organization of bands and the establishment and improvement of playgrounds. And some twenty states have student loan funds.

In "Women in The Twentieth Century," Sophonisba P. Breckinridge stated:

"Clubs began to appear in the sixties and their growth marked the emergence of the middle-aged and middle class woman from her kitchen and her home. The federation of those local, unrelated groups into a general affiliation, for no particular purpose other than the job of mutual conference about problems not yet enunciated or apparent, was a significant introduction to the nineties."

The General Federation of Women's Clubs began in 1889,

under the egis of Sorosis, a New York women's club, started in 1864, as a protest against barring Jenny June Croly, a writer, from a meeting of writers held in New York in honor of the American visit of Charles Dickens.

But not only did men discriminate against women in denying them admission to organizational activities, but women discriminated against women. The National Association of Colored Women was formed in 1896 because the General Federation of Women's Clubs discriminated against Negro women. Yet, in their conventions, the General Federation of Women's Clubs sometimes displayed a high degree of social awareness.

They passed resolutions calling upon the Federal Government for a law that would provide:

"... in mill, factory, workshop, laundry, and mercantile establishment, the maximum working day for women and children shall not exceed eight hours or forty-eight hours per week.

"... that no child under 14 years of age be employed in mill, factory, workshop, store, office, or laundry, and no boy under 16 years in mines.

"... that adequate school facilities, including manual training, should be provided in the United States for every child up to the age of 14 years ..."

However, in a convention held at Denver in 1898, attended by eight hundred delegates, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, with an estimated membership of 160,000, dispatched its first petition to Congress, and it contained not a message about woman and child protection, but a plea for the passage of a bill providing for the protection of birds.

Between their primary concern over the protection of birds, and their secondary concern over the conditions of women and children in industry, lay a hodge-podge of activities that included tree planting, driveway making and repairing, and a great many more things, with special attention given to literary studies, notably the writings of Browning.

And most likely this sort of scrambled and predominantly futile

activity was partly the cause of the campaign of ridicule waged against club women. But not the sole cause, for much of it bore evidence of criticizing women for leaving the home at all, or of having any interest outside the home, and even of just slandering them because they were women.

There was no reason, of course, why women should not have their clubs for light social diversion, and even for "rest" as some of them termed it, but reviewing the movement as a whole, taking into account the number of women involved, and the problems with which they were faced as women, it does seem that there was, and is, a great deal of relatively inconsequential fiddling.

A spokesman of the people stated:

"When the entire history of the woman's club movement is studied, one is forced to conclude that to date, considering the high degree of leisure afforded to the bulk of the membership, they have failed to become a significant constructive and progressive force.

"They are either wilfully blind to, or curiously unaware of, the fact that their meetings are little more than sounding boards for reactionary demagogues; that their organizations have been pressed into service for reactionary legislation, or for the repeal of existing progressive legislation."

These club women still live under values that were basically made to apply to slave women, and they are still subject to being called some ninety or so discrediting names; they are still dependent upon a means of making a living reached by personal invitation, and of being measured unfit by an artificial youth and beauty standard made to apply to sex slaves sold on the block.

## XXII

### *Phony Equality*

**I**N A SOCIETY made up of different age groups and two sex groups, who in turn do various kinds of work, different methods of arranging this work to fit their particular needs to the general social and economic pattern becomes a necessity. And to take care of these special needs, special legislation is required.

In a society where workers bid against one another in a competitive labor market, the most oppressed need special legislation to protect them from employers who would exact from them so great a toll, because of their weak position, as to be a drag even on capitalism.

Children, because of their immaturity and soft bodies, that are liable to be injured and permanently warped by heavy work in mines, or other grinding work, or from toiling long hours, need special legislation applying to them.

Women, because of childbearing, need special legislation to protect them from employers who would work them either in kinds of work, or for lengths of time, injurious to them or their children. Work such as the poison trades, and work which necessitates long-time standing, causing excessive congestion and discomfort during menstruation, or when heavy with child, and heavy lifting, as in certain types of industrial work, such as mining.

And women need time off from work to bear children, and since they require during this period all the necessities they ever did and have added expenses on account of the child, it follows that these things must be assured them.

Yet despite all these needs, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs have a program which they actively push, in a complex society, that would prevent special

group legislation being applied to women.

Atlantic City, N. J., July 23. (A.P.)—With a demonstration that lasted many minutes, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women resolved today to renounce any special favors accorded women by masculine-controlled government and fight for strict equality of the sexes under law.

By acclamation they voted to campaign for an amendment to the Federal Constitution which would bind Congress and the governing bodies of every state, county and municipality to pass no laws or ordinances applying solely to women.

When Miss Gertrude Mallory of Los Angeles moved for support of the constitutional amendment any dissenting vote was drowned in the cheers . . .

"Women Demand Equality,  
Convention Spurns 'Special Favors' "  
Los Angeles Examiner, July 24, 1937.

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, with a membership of 56,000 in 1100 local clubs in 1931, appears at first glance to be the heirs to the remnants of the old feminist movement. And it even seems that their program for women is more sterile than the old one because they are more completely isolated from the main social current.

On closer examination, however, one is forced to conclude that feminism with all its shortcoming and mistakes was predominantly in favor of woman, whereas this is not a program for women, even in a narrow sense, but against women.

There appears to be nothing about woman's life that has not been distorted. And it is not a simple distortion, but more as if one took a garment, say a skirt, and sewed one side so that it had a puckered appearance. This of itself would draw the other side of the skirt out of shape. But, say, there is sewn into the other side a piece resembling a gusset and we would indeed have a queer appearing garment.

Still, this garment, with its two queer sides, would not be more queer than the two distorted patterns of "ideal" motherhood, twisted to fit the interests and ideals of the rich. One is of an

exclusive professional motherhood that performs no other social function. It withdraws into isolation and seclusion, and is waited upon and fed, and is parasitical.

This is the ideal made to apply to only a few women, the bourgeoisie, for obviously it would not be applicable to all women in a society where the majority of the population is expected to work.

The other "ideal" of motherhood is meant for women of the working and producing classes. It is that they shall be shown no consideration during the stress of pregnancy and nursing, or as little as possible to insure the continuation of a labor supply.

The majority of women have always worked and have been useful members of society, and there is no indication that any other course is desirable. But the method of woman's work, and its arrangement to suit her particular needs in the case of childbirth, certainly does not fit the pattern established by the bourgeoisie, for either bourgeois or working women.

The program of the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, if carried out, would nullify all minimum wage laws for women. It would also make any social plan for maternity benefits impossible. And this is being done on the claim of "equality" for women.

Men do not need maternity benefits, so women to be equal with men must also not have maternity benefits, or special legislation to protect them as childbearers.

Their arguments are as unreasonable as would be the objection to old age pensions, or to sick benefits, on the basis that youth and well persons do not need these things, and that old persons and sick persons were being made unequal by extending to them benefits calculated to overcome their unequal capacities.

There has never been a labor-hating, union-fighting employer who did not claim that his program was in the interest of labor, and that he had the interests of labor at heart. Read the most reac-

tionary doctrines, laws and customs that have bound women for hundreds of years, and somewhere connected with them you will find the claim that it is done to protect women. And the claim that the best way to get rid of harmful legislation is to throw out the beneficial too, is an old tactic used by reactionaries to confuse the real issue, and has been applied to other groups besides women.

Perhaps no other strata of women have benefited as much from woman's struggles for a better life as business and professional women. They have had opened to them some of the better schools, and many of the professions. They gained by the efforts of the Lucy Stoners, for it has been very advantageous for certain of the professional and business women to retain their own names, especially when their names became established in their profession, or business, before marriage.

They have benefited by the fight waged by the Amelia Bloomers, by being enabled to wear attire that does not make them ridiculous. And, conversely, if woman loses ground in her struggles to go forward, business and professional women certainly will not be unaffected by this loss.

To aid woman in her struggles against slipping back into the dark slough of social reaction and the decaying slime of fascism, we must have additional theory, covering woman's relations to different social groups. Certain historical events and trends, of vital significance to women, must be more completely evaluated and utilized than they have been heretofore.

Especially must there be a more adequate accounting of male domination under class rule, when and how it started in the subject classes, and some of the phases through which male domination has passed, and its effects upon the relations of women and men, women and their children, and upon men and society.

## XXIII

### *Woman's Ancient Freedom*

**F**OR THOUSANDS OF YEARS preceding the rise and dominance of capitalism, the historic era under which we live today, records written and unwritten revealed changing forms of slavery that stretched ever backward into greater antiquity, until it seemed that there had never been a time when women were free and the people were not oppressed.

Yet, evidence existed that equality between men and women and freedom on a highly organized plane had once been universal. These shreds of evidence were only to become welded into a conclusive, unmistakable whole, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, through the work of the American anthropologist, Lewis H. Morgan.

He prepared questionnaires, based on his studies of the American Indians, which were sent by the United States Government to other countries. They furnished a comparative study on early civilizations in general and the American Indians in particular, and the information thus gathered helped furnish the basis of his work.

It was discovered that the American Indians had definite codes of conduct and a well developed social culture. Matters affecting the tribe were decided in people's councils, and every one, regardless of sex, had a voice in these affairs.

They navigated streams and lakes with dugout and birch-bark canoes, and some tribes had developed pottery. Many tribes had a deliberate, planned agriculture and others supplemented their wild meat supply by harvesting the wild food crops in season.

They all built effective shelters, manufactured wearing apparel

and designed various articles for ornamentation and decoration. They did rhythmic dances and musical chants to the accompaniment of skin drums and other sound making devices and engaged in games of recreation and sport.

And in the highly developed social organizations of the American Indians, and in the remnants of other forms that preceded them, was found the key that unlocked many puzzles relating to the early history of mankind in the old world. Here, in the new world was discovered proof that the peoples of the old world once had social organizations similar to those of the American Indians.

The fundamental significance of this fact was not publicly made known until 1877, through the publication of Morgan's "Ancient Society." In the preface to the book, Morgan stated:

"The history and experience of the American Indian tribes represent, more or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors when in corresponding conditions. Forming a part of the human record, their institutions, arts, inventions and practical experience possess a high and special value reaching far beyond the Indian race itself."

At the time of the invasion of America, Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia, the South Pacific Islands and the Philippines, by the ruling class of Europe, there existed in these vast territories hundreds of tribes that had never felt the influence of slavery.

Many of these tribes were found to have certain features of social organization that were alike in all the tribes of this group. Others still retained customs indicating that their social organizations had evolved from more primitive forms, but, despite all such changes, these special features had persisted for thousands of years. Other tribes, for instance those of the Malay Peninsula and Australia, still had the more primitive social forms.

Moreover, the ancient Egyptians, the Semites, Sumerians, Chinese and the peoples of Europe, including the ancestors of

the English, Irish, Scotch and Dutch, and hundreds of peoples of Asia and Africa, even down to historic times, all showed evidence of not only having passed through a tribal stage but of having had at one time the same peculiar social organizations as the American Indians.

Morgan showed that a primitive American tribe normally was composed of persons related by blood. In typical cases it was divided into from four to eight gentes, or family clans. These clans were the very structural units, the organizational foundation, of the tribe itself.

The family-clan (gens) ordinarily contained from 50 to 250 persons, all near relatives, and, in the majority of tribes, was composed of mothers and their children. These women were related in somewhat the same manner as if they had all descended from one woman and her daughters.

The girls in such tribes were not permitted to marry men who belonged to their mother's family-clan, regardless of how distant the relationship. They married men who belonged to other clans, within the tribe.

After marriage, the girl did not become a member of her husband's family-clan, but still remained a member of her mother's clan, and her children were named after it.

Since the sons in a family-clan had to marry girls in other clans, children never belonged to the same family-clan as their father. Therefore, the children had the protection of their mother's clan, if an inter-clan dispute arose.

The husband did not belong to the same clan as his wife and if serious conflict had developed between them, she would have had the protection of her mother's brothers, her brothers, her sons and the other men within her family-clan.

As a consequence of this form of the family, the father and husband, the two alleged dominating jealous tyrants, could not have oppressed the free women and children of another family-clan,

even had they wanted to do so.

Although in these tribes, with the maternal family-clans, there was a division of labor between the sexes, both men and women had a definite established method of making a living and the woman's work did not depend upon the favor of the man.

These primitive mothers and their children not only produced a large part of the common food supply but almost invariably had an independent method of securing food regularly, or in emergencies. In some of these tribes agriculture was introduced by women and became the principal source of the tribe's food supply.

Since neither the tools of production nor the land belonged to the men, marriage did not make such tribal women dependent upon their husbands, and, therefore, they and their children could not have been dominated by men through economic control of the means of subsistence.

Propagandists have told us that at one stage of society women ruled men, that this in turn was replaced by a system whereby men ruled women. They said that men grew tired of being henpecked and asserted themselves, and put woman in her place; that henpecking was replaced by roosterpecking.

All the evidence shows that there has never been rule by women, and, furthermore, that there has never been rule by men. Under matriarchal law men did not live in inequality, instead both men and women were free. And certainly under what was known as the patriarchy not even all the fathers were free, much less all the men.

Prior to the invasion of the whites, the American Indians lived sane, orderly lives. Private property consisted in things of personal use, clothing, ornaments and such, and did not extend to sources of food supplies.

Women built the houses, but when built they were not the property of women, but of the families who inhabited them.

Every one had equal access to the natural resources and the social system was communal, within the tribe, throughout the country.

The existence of primitive communism is not an assumption, but a proven fact. Morgan was not the only one who observed this. In fact the sharing of food within tribes was so deeply established that Lewis and Clark, in the Journal of their Northwest Expedition (1803-1806), wrote wonderingly of one tribe of Indians, living on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, precisely because they were the one exception to this custom.

Lewis and Clark, having already visited dozens of tribes on their transcontinental journey to the mouth of the Columbia River, decided that this tribe's practice of each hunter keeping what he killed, while others around him were hungry, was due to disintegration and lowering of social standards through disruption and being crowded back into arid and impoverished territory by the whites.

When the American Indians passed under subjugation, their general status became similar to that of other subjugated groups throughout history and they were ridiculed and labeled inferior to help perpetuate their subjugation, and furnish a defense of it.

In "The Origin of the Family," Frederick Engels says of the American Indians: "All are free and equal—the women included. There is no room yet for slaves, nor for the subjugation of foreign tribes. When about 1651 the Iroquois had vanquished the Eries . . . they offered to adopt them into the league on equal terms . . . What splendid men and women were produced by such a society! All the white men who came into contact with unspoiled Indians admired the personal dignity, straightforwardness, strength of character and bravery of these barbarians."

The evidence shows that prior to the advent of slavery, all other peoples lived lives and possessed social institutions similar to those of the American Indians.

## XXIV

### *Early Slavery*

**A**FTER THE OVERTHROW of maternal law and free society, what existed was class rule, with male domination. Frederick Engels, in "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," describes this change as a "revolution—one of the most radical ever experienced by humanity."

Male domination varied greatly in social classes, with different eras. For a long time the men who were completely subjugated appear to have had no control over subject women, instead the status of both male and female slaves more nearly approximated that of the Negro men and women in the United States under chattel slavery.

Even up into feudalism this control was exercised. August Bebel tells us, in "Woman, Past, Present and Future," that "the landlord possessed the almost absolute right of disposal over his serfs and dependents. He had the right as soon as a male reached his 18th year, or the female her 14th, to compel their marriage. He could assign a woman to a man, and a man to a woman. He enjoyed the same right over widows and widowers . . . he also considered the sexual use of his female serfs and dependents to be at his own disposal."

Primitive tribes and peoples who had been contaminated by class institutions, yet had not been brought completely under their control, and lived on the fringes of territories ruled by the iron hand of the exploiters, evinced a kindlier attitude between sex, age and property groups.

This was reflected in the customs of American Indian tribes who were held by economic ties to certain observances connected with private property institutions, and influenced by them, yet treated women with greater equality than whites. They adopted

Negro slaves into the tribe and treated them with equality, despite the rabid campaign of hatred and slander against Negroes that was carried on by the slave owners.

Because there was resistance to exploitation, both by the peoples who had been brought completely under its domination, and by those who had not, and because the clash of opposing classes produced a form of life that varied with the intensity and power of the contending forces, the class struggle expressed itself in a wide variety of forms, both in the old world and in the new.

Remnants of former free tribal customs and social forms which remained in the old world alongside of slavery for thousands of years, were comprehensible only after the discoveries of Lewis Henry Morgan, combined with the dialectics of the class struggle as formulated by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

But it would be an error to conclude that in every case where tribal forms and customs continued that it was done in opposition to the exploiters. In many instances these very forms appear to have been used to help weld the population to exploitation, distorted of course, after the fashion of what are called "labor unions" in Germany and Italy.

The drawing of lots and parceling out of land, under what was apparently communistic tribal customs, are often found to be instead only a means by which a feudal lord distributed land amongst his serfs to keep down strife over who should receive the better strips. The use made of village patriarchs in Northern Russia to rule the serfs for the feudal lords, has been cited by Joseph Stalin.

Prisoner-of-war slavery came after the overthrow of the institutions of free peoples. Out of Prisoner-of-war slavery chattel slavery evolved, wherein free men and women were hunted down and captured and sold at so much a head like captured live stock.

After a great deal of the "known" world was raided over by marauding owners and their mercenary armies, it was no longer as

profitable, or, because of resistance, it was not possible to work men and women by standing guard over them unceasingly, or chaining them, and new tactics were adopted.

One such tactic was the placing of slave men over slave women. The male was bound to the land and inherited with the land, or sold with it, and the woman and her children were subject to the male serf, within the scope defined by the feudal lord.

After the rise of the feudal system in Europe the owning class instituted the system of giving their male serfs wives. The *land* lords desired the breeding and rearing of more workers and allotted separate houses to men and permitted them to have female serfs as their sex slaves and as cooks, nurses and field hands.

In return for the gift of a sex slave, the male serf was compelled to help rear the children, help with home manufacture of supplies and was accountable to his master as slave driver of the woman and her children in their work in the fields.

The male serf became the overseer of an economic unit composed of his subject wife and children. His children were the property of his master. The use of family labor became the cheapest method of production.

At the time of the overthrow of feudalism by capitalism, the feudal type of the family had been generally enforced on all the capitalist elements of the population and the capitalist owning class had never known any but subjugated women.

They came from a class that had bought and sold them, and the practice of the feudal lords of trading daughters where it would do the most good for their personal and family fortunes fitted well the capitalists' trading and wealth acquiring proclivities.

And these property marriages and alliances and the already established subjugation and propertyless status of women determined the future family of the capitalist owners with but few changes.

The system of agriculture inaugurated under feudalism, with

family economic units, fitted well into early capitalist ownership, especially where land was given to serfs, and it fitted even better where land was tilled by tenants.

Such farming could not be carried out so cheaply without a cook, nurse and field hand in the person of the mother working extra long hours. No other group of hands could be fed so cheaply in cotton, tobacco or sugar-beet production, nor produce as much rent and interest on so little capital.

When farm families manufactured their food and clothing in the home under early capitalism, the tenants produced almost all of their own living and practically all surplus that went to market could be taken by the owners as rent.

Under early capitalism the majority of the men were not allowed to vote, and in 1797, more than a hundred years after the Cromwellian Revolution against feudalism in England, Charles Fox publicly ridiculed a plea to enfranchise adult males on the basis of how ridiculous it would be to give the vote to women. And what treatment was meted out to women, when the men were so badly treated?

I. B. O'Malley, in "Women In Subjugation," states: "The savage criminal law was more cruel to women than to men . . . women were subjects whose offenses against their masters were in the nature of a revolt and must be put down with the severity usual in punishing the rebellion of slaves. This attitude was most plainly expressed in the treatment of wives who murdered or helped to murder, their husbands. It was because women were supposed to owe their husbands the same kind of duty that subjects owed their prince that this crime was called 'Petty Treason' and was punished by burning to death . . . The last woman to be executed in this way seems to have been Mary Cornelius Beyley, in 1784."

The method of keeping both men and women economically bound under feudalism was much too effective for capitalists to relinquish. The following letter, to the editor of the Los Angeles Evening News, May 10, 1937, shows its present effects upon both men and women, as well as upon their children:

Sirs: I have been up before a judge twice in the last two months for failure to provide. The judge said, "Pay up, or up the river you go, or else leave the country."

. . . I cannot get steady work . . . The welfare people insist that I be put on the road gang to earn 50 cents a day. I have been in this city nine years and have always given my share to the Community Chest, each year.

When my ex-wife applied for help all she heard was "drag him in, and we'll send him up and collect the \$15.00 a month he earns . . ."

I have known many men to disappear in a case of this kind and I don't blame them, for no one wants to be classed as a criminal because he has no work.

I was told at the welfare office that I was able-bodied and could beg, borrow or chisel for my alimony or else get picked up and sent on the road gang. Nice people.

My ex-wife, having made a remark that someday she may marry again, was cut off relief the next day when the welfare people heard about it. This left my child without her milk for several days, until my wife fought more red tape to get aid that I could not possibly give her . . .

. . . I am going to take a freight train somewhere—anywhere, where I can look for work without fear of jail. The mail man will bring some money for my baby as soon as I can make any. I have never loafed a day in my life voluntarily.

F. Kren.

The man is required to reach a certain economic status before setting up a family economic, or subsistence, unit. By no means do all subject men attain the status where they are overseers of such a unit, composed of subject wife and children, and of these there are thousands who are unable to maintain this status.

## XXV

### *Who the Workers Are*

**A** REMARKABLE CHANGE has taken place in the working class during the time between capitalism's rise and its era of decline.

During early capitalism when the people worked in little groups in factories with crude tools, or tilled the soil with crude implements, each isolated factory and farm group produced in a manner that, to a considerable degree, made it independent of close contact with the others. Few of the people could read or write and the means of communication were as crude as the tools of production.

Relatively few women worked away from home establishments. They were restricted to association with their own families, or, at most, to a limited group of acquaintances. The majority were unschooled, and their minds were weighted down with superstitious dogmas and their limbs with dragging skirts.

They were unsure of themselves, for they knew the sting of contempt and the leaden feeling of inferiority that had been impressed upon them. Women were afraid of so many things; of being not respectable, of death and the devil.

But today it is different. The people are different, and the method of production is now complex and requires a highly trained and skilled class of men and women to operate its inter-related parts; a working class that can read and write, and millions of which have been to high school and college.

Women, by their wider freedom and schooling have thrown off a great deal of their superstitious fears and feelings of inferiority. They are now surer of themselves, and better prepared in every way to cope with their problems.

For working efficiency, thousands and millions of persons live in cities and industrial centers. They work in establishments employing hundreds and often thousands of workers. One Ford plant employs 40,000 workers. Isolation of a sort still exists but it is not the isolation, due to distance and lack of communication, which the people knew in early capitalism, but an isolation between race, religious, sex and age groups.

The people in general know many advantages that were made possible by a change from feudalism to capitalism. However, there has not been an even, progressive development in all phases of production under capitalism.

*Particularly with reference to women and the Negro people there have been lags in the methods of performing the useful work they do; feudalistic lags which exist within a wider pattern of highly developed, mechanized capitalist production, and are modified somewhat by these surroundings.*

In the United States, women in isolated household units are performing tasks by hand labor that falls far short of keeping pace with the technological advancement of the most highly industrialized and richest country in the world.

The capitalists did not, as their spokesmen claim, give the people a better life gratuitously. Nor was improvement due solely to the mechanical processes and to an increased variety of goods. The better life had to be fought for.

Through their increased economic power the workers won, by strikes and protests, the vote for adult white males, while the demonstrations and agitation, and petitions to Congress, before women were permitted to vote, is still too fresh in our minds to be forgotten.

The key to the increased power of the people lay mainly in the increased power of the working class, arising from the growing dependence of each phase of the productive process upon the balance of the process. If one part failed to function it threw the

rest out of gear. Workers thus wielded tremendous power, through their unions, protests and strikes.

Communication and transportation are not only interdependent, but their tentacles have penetrated and grown into every one of the industrial cells.

Manufacturing is not only dependent upon agriculture and mining, but agriculture cannot stand alone as it once did, for mining and manufacturing are just as necessary to agriculture as manufacturing is to mining. Agriculture today is mechanized and metal must be mined to make the machines, and oil mined for their lubrication.

And just as every division of production and distribution is inseparably linked to every other, so the workers in each find the performance of their tasks inseparably linked to that of all other workers in industry.

The labor of the entire producing class is knit into the productive process, and once the labor of an individual becomes a part of that process, no one can separate out its worth.

For this reason, and because they must work in unison, we say that production has become socialized and that the entire producing population is working co-operatively to make and distribute products.

But the benefits are not socially utilized, for possession and title rests with a small percentage of the population. 83% of the total capital investment in 1928 was in the hands of the utility, manufacturing and finance corporations. While in 1938 President Roosevelt stated that "today a concentration of private power without equal in history is growing."

He went on to say that 5 per cent of all corporations own 87 per cent of all assets, and that less than 4 per cent of all manufacturing corporations receive 84 per cent of the net profits of all of them.

So here is an individualism in ownership that is going in exactly

the opposite direction to the growth of collective effort in production. Under declining capitalism dominant ownership is held by an increasingly smaller number of private title holders, grouped in trusts and combines.

Who are the owners of the means of production? A small group of very rich people.

Who are the workers? Nearly everybody. 80% of the people of the United States are dependent on wages and salaries. And the working farmers combined with the wage and salary workers, and their families, are 95% of the people in the United States.

Furthermore, doctors and dentists and other professional people who depend upon a fee paid from the wage of labor for their incomes, are not more secure than the ability of labor to retain a job at a wage which would allow them to pass this fee on to those who serve them.

Nor is there anywhere a stage in the process, whether labor's wage is being scaled up or down, where the economic status of these professionals ceases to move up and down with that of labor.

Also, all those lines of trade which depend upon the trade and fees from those business men and women who depend upon the fee paid from the wage of labor, are as dependent upon the wage of labor as those dentists and physicians who are paid a fee from labor direct. They get their living second-hand from the wage of labor, and when labor's wage no longer maintains them they, together with their dependent wives and children, are forced out into the ranks of the dispossessed.

Where do women particularly fit into the process of wealth production, and how are they distributed as to lines of work? "More than three-fourths of all women are not in gainful occupations," according to U. S. Dept. of Labor Bulletin No. 155, and of these the great majority are household workers.

Grace Hutchins, in "Women Who Work," lists the principal

occupations of 10,750,000 women who work away from the home establishment, as based on the 1930 U. S. Census.

The largest number of women in any one occupation are those in the servant group, which accounts for more than 1,500,000. Farm laborers and laundresses, not in laundries, account for over 1,000,000 more.

There are over 1,000,000 stenographers, typists, bookkeepers and cashiers, while clerks in stores number about 1,500,000.

Women school teachers total over 750,000.

About 2,500,000 women are engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries, in tobacco, steel, cotton, etc. Women make nearly all the clothing and this figure includes that important group of workers. It also includes those women who work in munitions and other war industries as well as those in industries readily convertible into the making of munitions. The equipment for manufacturing rayon is especially adaptable to this purpose and is said to be convertible overnight to such use.

However, we will not find the key to woman's oppression in the exploitation of women wage workers. Instead the basic cause lies in the relation of housewives' work to social production. In our next two chapters we shall show particularly how this is true.

## XXVI

### *"The Pivot of the System"*

**I**T MAY BE DIFFICULT for the woman doctor, lawyer, teacher or other professional or business woman, to seek the solution to the particular discrimination she meets in the nature of the work housewives do, and see the importance of this work and its relation to social production and, in turn, its importance to her.

The woman doctor who finds her life and work affected by the attitude of fear with which many persons regard her, cannot escape the conclusion that her troubles key to the opinion that women are incompetent, and that woman's conduct is liable, even in treatment of the sick, to be erratic and unpredictable.

In other words these persons see when they look at her, not primarily a doctor, but primarily a woman and secondarily a doctor. And not even a woman as she is, but as she is said to be, so no wonder they distrust her.

The handicaps under which business and professional women live and work were levied upon women before there were any business or professional women. Basically they were levied upon women as productive workers, and basically they continue because, under capitalism, housewives' work, in a majority of cases, is necessary to the process of producing and distributing commodities, and we must first take into account the base to understand deviations from the base.

"Capitalism does not without reason make the economic institution of the family, or the family household, with its subjugation of women, the pivot of its system," wrote R. Palme Dutt in an essay, "Women and the Class Struggle," published in "Woman's Coming of Age," a symposium.

In the subjugation of women the aim of the subjectors is the same as that toward any other subject group: the acquisition of labor products, of surplus values, created by others; gold, wheat, cotton or other wealth, or a service such as cooking, nursing, hairdressing, etc.

No one would give up to another, either knowingly or unknowingly, what they themselves created, nor perform menial tasks for an idle class they despised, except for one reason: because that class controls their means of subsistence, their jobs, their feeding grounds so to speak, the lands and the means of production.

Now, while the reason for subjugation is simple—the acquisition of surplus values; rent, interests and profits,—and simple also the fundamental thing on which it rests—expropriation—there is nothing else simple about the arrangement, on the contrary, it is very complex, and it is more complex in the case of woman than any other subject group.

The acquiring of surplus values has become complex chiefly because the means of creating this wealth has changed, and many persons who do necessary social labor in relation to the production of wealth, no longer come directly into contact with the owners of the means of production, and some of these persons are often unaware of the very existence of the class of "takers" for whom they work.

Of this group who have no direct contact with their exploiters, are housewives who work only at home, and the means of exploiting them is clear only when we take into account the entire *system* of production.

Another reason subjugation is more complex with women, is that sex has been injected, not only as an actuality, but it has been injected in theory far beyond its importance in reality, and there is a very pronounced tendency to seek the answer to woman's enslavement in a sex use.

It is in her status as a bearer and trainer of subject children, and as a worker, whose work is related to the creation of profits, that we will find the answer.

The following news item, from the Los Angeles Times, Dec. 9, 1936, indicates woman's role as household worker, producing children for cheap labor and plenty of cheap soldiers for imperialistic armies:

Tokio, Dec. 9, (A.P.)—Baroness Shizue Ishimoto, editor of the *Woman's Encyclopedia*, shocked a large audience with the assertion Japanese women frequently were treated with no more respect than idiots or lunatics . . .

Even the women of superior classes are not free, she declared, citing her own inability to get a passport to visit the United States, until her husband applies for it. "History reveals Japanese women occupied a much higher position in society before the advent of Buddhism (552 A.D.) in Japan. The present reactionary regime decrees women shall become household machines producing human bombs or to meet the demand for cheap labor."

We emphasize subject woman's role as a bearer of subject children and not just children, because a great deal of confusion centers around the claim that woman's subordinate status is necessitated by a biological difference, that of child-bearing.

For this reason we call attention, as sharply as we can, to the important difference, and the fact, that it is not just the bearing of children, but subject children, that is responsible for what biological basis exists for woman's subjugation.

If woman's subjugation arose simply from a biological cause, uncomplicated by a class reason, then it would be useless to try to change it because women will continue to bear children. But it is not the case. Women throughout history have borne children and there is proof that during part of the time they were everywhere socially and economically the equals of men.

Neither the woman question, nor the man question which arises from it, is primarily a sex question, but an economic question, although no part of their personal lives, including sex, has

escaped being involved.

It is true that a group of women are held to sex enslavement. These sex serfs perform no useful work and are held to their social parasitism by most cruel methods, and are terribly oppressed both in their persons and in their civil liberties; but this group in actual numbers is small compared to the great majority of women.

Yet most of the things written about women of ancient and medieval times that attempt to trace woman's past life, center around this very small group, or outstanding individuals of this type, and give practically no space to the important majority group of women who were performing socially useful work, yet were held to oppression.

Nor would a description of the working women of such historic eras alone have been sufficient, but an adequate account of their lives must also have included the conditions and method of work of the entire toiling and producing populations, with which their status was indissolubly linked.

On the other hand there is another tendency to seek the answer to woman's enslavement in the lower pay women wage workers, especially those in production, receive below that of men.

Women, according to this latter theory, are discriminated against so employers can work them cheaper. This situation exists, but it is not the cause of woman's subjugation, on the contrary, is an effect of it.

Women do not prefer to work for lower wages, nor are they unaware of the fact that they do work for less than men are paid. So some strong reason impels them; and it is the pressure of circumstances arising from the fact that all the discriminations they meet key back to a second-hand economic status applying to subject women.

A status based on woman reaching her allotted economic sphere through marriage, taking a subordinate position to man, and as a consequence being labeled inferior to perpetuate her subjugation

by turning persons against her, as well as causing her to conduct herself in the manner of a subordinate.

It should not surprise us greatly to see that business and professional women do not correctly estimate the importance of housewives' work and its relation to their problems, when we observe that ordinarily the housewife herself does not suspect that the key to the mystery has been so close to her. That it was as close as the dishes she washed and the meals she cooked; as close as the clothing she mended and washed, and ironed.

She knew the importance to her family of this work she did, but she had no idea that it was important to persons whom she had never seen and would never see.

She perceived the importance of this work when applied to each of her neighbors, and to each individual household everywhere, but the significant thing she did not know was the importance of the work the totality of some 22 million non-wage earning housewives in the United States did when taken in relation to the entire system of production.

Out of the 23 million married women listed in the 1930 U. S. Census, who have no earnings or income of their own, perhaps 22 million do all, or nearly all, of their own housework.

## XXVII

### *The Housewife's Role in Social Production*

**W**ORKERS OF NO OTHER GROUP have had their importance so ignored and denied as present day housewives.

Because productive tasks once performed in the home are now performed elsewhere, the housewife's work now is under-rated to such an extent that she is considered in certain quarters to even be living in ease and parasitism.

Adding to this erroneous notion, and appearing to support it, is the fact that the 22 million housewives who work only at home and do all their work have no earnings or income of their own and must depend upon their food, clothing and housing being bought with money earned by their husbands.

Now this support a husband gives his wife comes out of production, and if she is not useful, in fact indispensable to the owners of industry, why do they permit 22 million women to subsist on the proceeds of industry? They could not possibly be unaware that these 22 million women, not directly productive, are out there.

And this owning class is noted for its ability to exploit the balance of the population in some manner. So insistent are they that persons work for them that they even hound those they refuse to employ, because they are unemployed, as the bulk of the vagrancy cases bear witness.

Why then do not the paid propagandists of this owning class attack this arrangement of 22 million housewives being maintained out of the proceeds of industry, instead of lauding the arrangement and surrounding it with moralistic robes?

There can be only one answer. Under certain conditions it

profits them. Under certain conditions it is irreplaceable.

One very striking peculiarity of certain trends of theory about woman and what is called woman's work, is that this work has been described and then elsewhere, generally apart from it, broad generalizations have been made referring to woman's subjugation being a part of the system of the exploitation of human labor, but these two things have not been adequately connected.

It is somewhat as if the woods were described and in a separate section the trees were also described but the whole matter was left in such a disconnected shape that neither seemed to have any relation to the other; the trees did not appear to be in the woods and the woods were not a collectivity of trees.

Let us illustrate the point further: The work of a cook in a logging camp is a necessary part of the production of lumber. The services of all the cooks in all the camps, restaurants and eating places wherever productive workers are fed, are a necessary part of production. And for the same reason, the work of the cooks in the homes of productive workers is also, at present, a necessary part of production.

The labor of a woman, who cooks for her husband, who is making tires in the Firestone plant in Southgate, California, is essentially as much a part of the production of automobile tires as the cooks and waitresses in the cafes where Firestone workers eat.

And all the wives of all the Firestone workers, by the necessary social labor they perform in the home, have a part in the production of Firestone Tires, and their labor is as inseparably knit into those tires as is the labor of their husbands.

Anyone can multiply this illustration by the products produced by Republic Steel, Standard Oil, Henry Ford, etc., and always get the same answer, that the wives' labor is a necessary service in the creation of products in these plants.

The labor of workers in the laundries who wash clothing for

productive workers is necessary to the system of production. Maids and porters who sweep the floors, make the beds and tidy the rooms in boarding houses or camps where productive workers sleep and rest, so that they may prepare themselves to return to work the next day, are a necessary link in the productive process.

And in the same way, the labor of housewives in the homes of productive workers who perform the services of keeping clothing washed and beds and floors clean, is also an indispensable part of production.

Persons who work in houses where children are boarded and trained, or schooled, are performing a useful service, and their labor is indispensable to the present method of production and distribution. And for a similar reason, millions of women in homes, who do the greater part of such work, are rendering an indispensable service to the present method of producing and distributing commodities.

If profits are to be made, commodities must not only be produced but distributed. Both production and distribution are complex and are inseparably linked to communication and transportation, and have tentacles that extend into schools and almost every legitimate phase of human activity.

The housewife does not cook eight or nine hours like the camp cook, nor wash and iron a stated number of hours like the laundry worker, nor make beds for certain hours like the maid in the hotel or rooming house, nor teach and nurse and feed children, future productive workers, a stated number of hours like teachers and workers in nurseries and schools, but she does perform all these tasks, and more, for unlimited and unstated hours every day, every week, and every month for years.

If the man cook in the lumber camp could be held to a subordinate economic position, directly under another worker and required to work, not nine hours, but an indefinite number, from ten

to twelve, or more, and be paid nothing directly but have to get his keep from the little extra given the worker over him, and then be scornfully referred to as being "kept," it is easy to see that his employer would be further enriched by the decreased status and lengthened hours of the cook.

And it is in some such manner that the collective owners of industry, the Hearsts, Rockefellers, Mellons, du Ponts, Fords and Morgans benefit by the cheap labor of the collective housewives and their resultant economic and social degradation. Besides, the wife's dependence is a means of binding the man too, and of reaching through the parents their subject children.

And what shall we say of the housework middle class women performed under developing capitalism, cleaning, cooking, ironing, scrubbing and washing clothes and dishes? We must consider the work of most of these women as being necessary to the system of production and distribution also.

It is true that some of them had hired girls but in many cases where they did, the housewife herself performed a great deal of useful work. It is our belief that the majority of the women of what is commonly called the middle class, did not subsist parasitically upon society, but did socially useful, necessary work.

Why was it useful, and why was it necessary? Because at one stage of the development of capitalism the middle class was an indispensable part of the system of manufacturing and distributing commodities. These persons with small capital investments were useful to the big capitalists, who had not yet gotten around to department and chain stores, and mass production and distribution.

When feudalism was overthrown by capitalism, the new system in the process of revolutionizing production, and spreading over the world, utilized millions of small producers and distributors.

And until the big capitalists had time and opportunity to expand over the entire earth with imperialistic, monopolistic combines and interlocking companies, banks, loans and business inter-

ests, hundreds of thousands of little stores and one-man management factories, with the manager often making a hand himself, were required in the United States, and millions more were required throughout the world.

This middle class helped build and develop and present machine system. During the building, the larger capitalists benefited by collecting tribute in the form of rent, interest, taxes and in various other ways from this middle class.

Yet, although this tribute increased in kind and amount with the years, that did not satisfy the big capitalists who wanted ownership in more and more cases and not only wanted ownership but took it.

And in time, monopoly-finance capitalists, with their inside track on politics and increasing power of wealth control, through financing and producing goods and selling them cheaper, practically destroyed the once numerically great middle class.

The small individually owned and operated factories and stores became outmoded and could not compete with ever-growing enterprises not handicapped by small capital investments. Such a method of production and distribution truly belonged to the horse and buggy days, but like the horse and buggy, useful in its historic setting.

The middle class housewife then, who did useful housework for a husband engaged in such work of production and distribution, or for sons so engaged, or for sons who were already, or preparing to become, technicians, engineers or teachers for the capitalists, or for daughters who would become the working wives of men so employed, such middle class housewives filled a socially useful role in their day to day work, and they contributed to the cumulative building of the great factory process that is modern America.

Housewives of both the middle and working classes helped create this wealth that is America today, and part of it belongs to them by right of toil.

## XXVIII

### *"Do I Not Keep You?"*

**J**OSEPH STALIN, speaking before Russian collective farm women and comparing their new life under the Soviets with the old, reminded them how hard they toiled in the old days, yet their husbands reproached them, saying, "Do I not keep you?"

This was understandable to the women he addressed, but the condition he described, applying to Russian women under the darkest days of Tsardom, is it understandable to women in the United States today? Yes, and it has a parallel here in the year 1939.

To do hard toil, and useful work, yet be branded as dependent, labeled "kept," "supported," nothing in the world is as galling as this. The worker engaged directly in industry is robbed of part of the product of his toil, but at least he is given credit for being self supporting. But the housewife is more completely robbed, being also robbed of part of the value of her toil, and robbed of credit for doing useful labor in relation to social production, for her work is commonly considered to be merely a labor of love for her intimate little group and to have no value apart from her immediate family.

Housewives have worked long hours, in most cases for their keep, and who benefited?

Not these women, and not the husbands and sons of these women. They worked, too, yet the majority of the population became more and more impoverished as the wealth of the country increased, so where did this increase go? It became the privately owned wealth of the owners of the means of production, of the Morgans, Fords, Mellons, Rockefellers, du Ponts, Hearsts and

their kind.

How much poorer the population of the United States has become, even though the nation has grown to be the richest in the world, can be gauged by the statement of the President of the United States, that one-third of the population is ill nourished, ill housed and ill clothed. The third amounts to over 40 million men, women and children.

Nor is the housewives' relation to social production the only part of the process that has been distorted, but, because the husbands of 22 million women stand in relation to their wives and the owners of industry as go-betweens supplying workshops in the form of "homes" where these women toil, the husband's role has been confused as that of the owner himself.

How absurd to call the majority of these men the owners of anything when they do not own their jobs in production, and their very bread is the private property of another.

The law makes it mandatory on the husband to "support" the woman in this workshop, and their children. And while the "support" the husband gives his wife must come out of production, and the owners of the means of production are not unaware of her existence, and while they also know that children must be raised if the supply of labor and soldiers is to remain adequate to their needs, yet the working man who is the support of his family is not secure in this amount.

Its inclusion in his pay check is not something he can take for granted and dismiss. It is instead something he must struggle desperately for, and a great many fail to get it at all and others are paid this amount only part of the time.

It is as if, after setting up the arrangement, they said to him, "try and get it." For few of these industrial barons but would pay his workers less than subsistence and think they were smart for having shifted this burden onto someone else.

But if the working man with dependents does not get the

support for his dependents from his employer for whom he produces surplus wealth, he finds his difficulties multiplied in attempting to get it elsewhere.

And the wives of those men who fail to receive this amount for their dependent households are held to an insecure arrangement of working in a non-wage paying subsistence unit, and then they are chiseled out of their subsistence.

Over three million wives in the United States take on the burden of outside work, in most cases to supplement the husband's inadequate income, and without being relieved of housework.

Yet, women like Mrs. Bessie Ochs, organizer of "The Neutral Thousands," and Mrs. Selvin, organizer of "Women of the Pacific," attempt to enlist housewives in a campaign against labor unions.

They make this attempt despite the fact that the sole purpose of labor unions is to improve working conditions and the rate of pay of their husbands; pay not only for his work, but for the housewife's work, which is paid to her, through him.

The tasks of a woman who has work only through marriage, varies with the location of the establishment. If situated on a farm her duties are multiplied a dozen times by water carrying, garden tending, milking, churning, poultry raising, food preserving, drying and packing.

And often, especially in the cotton country, she makes a hand in the field, plowing, chopping and picking. Or, in some sections, driving a sulky rake or a mower, or wielding a pitchfork during hay making.

Or, stripping and cutting cane and tending the press, or standing over the steaming vats, skimming and changing the boiling fluid as it progresses from cane juice to molasses.

Or making soap, curing meats and manufacturing lard, sauerkraut, quilts, and hominy and many things more. All this not

in lieu of, but in addition to, housekeeping tasks of clothes washing, ironing, cooking and dishwashing, sewing, mending, cleaning and the care of children.

We come then to see the social importance of 22 million housewives' work, and its present day relation to the production of commodities. And we see how erroneous is the belief that the housewife became unimportant to the system of production when the home mainly ceased to be the place of production it once was. We say mainly, and not entirely, because the most valuable of all commodities is still produced there: Labor Power.

We see that although the work these women do is socially useful and the subsistence they receive in payment of it comes out of production, that they have access to this work only by personal invitation based on a sex relationship, and that if a woman fails to receive an invitation to marry she is denied this work.

The insecurity of a great number of those women who failed to receive this invitation, and consequently this work, the situation into which they were thrown under a system predicated on the assumption that every woman could, or would, so receive it, was pointed to as proof of its desirability.

What a sweet arrangement for the capitalists! To have things so fixed that when a woman marries her husband she also marries her work under capitalist production.

No wonder the soothsayers have been able to entangle and intermix the bonds of affection between her and her mate and children with the distasteful, outmoded work she did, and say that she could not have the former without also taking the latter.

On the contrary, if woman is to have a husband and children in happiness and security, she must see that this very arrangement of her work has become a handicap, not only to her but to them, for the economic scene is shifting for productive workers, and women are in this thing with the rest of the working and producing population.

Marriage, in all the industrialized nations, during about 70 years, furnished the majority of women some measure of security, and although many of these women were bound to an unending round of hard or distasteful work, and were often legally tied to unsuitable mates, they felt, during that period, that marriage could be relied upon to support them and their children.

This 70 years was the period when the present system of capitalist production and distribution was expanding over the entire earth, using surplus goods and surplus men in building the vast new mechanized industries, the steamships and railroads.

Now that the building has been almost completed, within the scope of capitalist relations, and capitalism is no longer expanding, but contracting, conditions have changed and millions of women are experiencing a very insecure present and all women face an uncertain future, for less workers are needed in production, making less jobs available for present and prospective wives.

Industry cannot absorb these women under the present arrangement, because there are already more women industrial workers than jobs for them.

The "solution" offered by capitalism's spokesmen is a most transparent fraud: they tell the unemployed housewives to go into industry, and the unemployed industrial women workers to marry and become housewives.

## XXIX

### *Outmoded Housework*

**A** GREAT DEAL OF SENTIMENTAL NONSENSE has been written about the work housewives do, tending to prove they can never escape it. Yet, if we trace down each of these sentimental idealizations, we find that it is definitely tied to poverty and disappears where persons have the means to lead a life in keeping with what the entire family desires and considers to be a high standard of living.

Families with sufficient income have never hesitated to hire a cook, and no great demoralizing sacrifice was considered to have been visited upon husband and children because the wife and mother no longer cooked the food.

Those with money employ kindly and competent nurse-maids for their children, and instead of this hurting their children, the practice is praised by authorities on child raising as a progressive and intelligent trend.

A great deal of the work formerly done in the home is now done socially even under capitalism, but the results are mainly appropriated by individual owners. Weaving and the making of clothing, the making of bedding and canning of foodstuffs have become profitable sources of income for factory owners.

The schooling of children, hospitalization and care of the sick, a large percentage of recreation and amusements and the necessary services for the dead, child births, and even weddings, have departed to a greater or less degree from individual homes.

The new method is more efficient and more scientific. Persons specially trained to do these tasks, work with others so trained, and they work regular hours and then are free.

The great lags in this progressive trend have been in the production of cooked foods, in the nursing and care of children, and in household cleaning and tidying. Laundering has lagged amazingly. This despite the fact that it is one service that could be done effectively with machinery at central points.

The work women do in isolated household units may be classified as consisting of two parts: household work, and the care of children.

Household work in turn may be classified into four main divisions: shopping, cooking, washing and cleaning.

In so far as it affects a woman's life, and her work, the care of children has two distinct phases. One phase has to do with the actual work connected with their care, and the other with the restrictive effects upon her life.

This latter phase narrows her interests and greatly lengthens her hours of duty. For example, if a woman has small children and they retire at, say, seven o'clock and she at eleven, there is a difference of four hours during which she must stay within calling distance of their voices for they require her presence for long hours even when asleep, or need no actual attention, but must have somebody on hand to protect them from accidental harm and to minister to unforeseen wants.

Such a woman may not participate often in political and social life. She may not even go to a movie in the evening, and during the summer she is denied the customary two weeks vacation that many women wage workers receive. She may not do any number of things, because she is shackled for unnecessary hours to the routine life of small children or to the care and supervision of children in their teens.

In a city of 500,000 people, containing, say, 100,000 working and lower middle class homes, 100,000 women are planning how to get the windows washed, the curtains cleaned, the clothing washed and ironed and the shopping done.

Not only is time wasted when 100,000 women go to market but marketing is becoming increasingly unpleasant. A woman must exercise unceasing vigilance otherwise when she returns home she will find that she has spent her husband's hard earned money for food not fit to serve him; soft bananas and tomatoes, pea pods mysteriously devoid of peas, green oranges artificially colored a beautiful yellow, loose heads of cabbage and stringy, bony, untrimmed cuts of meat. What a waste of time! What a nuisance altogether!

But individual shopping is only part of the present method of housekeeping and of cooked food production. There are also the individual cookings.

On 100,000 fires, skillets are smoking and pots boiling as 100,000 cooks cook 100,000 meals in our typical city of 500,000 persons. If there is an equal number of coffee and tea drinkers, 50,000 coffee pots will boil and 50,000 tea pots will steep.

When all is ready 100,000 women will serve 100,000 suppers and then wash 100,000 sets of dishes by a hand method so old it goes back beyond the ox cart stage. Few of the mechanical dishwashing machines will be found in the homes where they are needed the most, where the housewife does all the work herself.

Household hours average at least 50 hours a week, and on farms where there are babies they average 75, according to U. S. Labor Bulletin No. 155.

Now there are in the United States not 100,000 but 26 million households, where a minimum of 26 million persons, either in the capacity of servants or housewives, expend some 200 million hours of labor every day.

If we take into account that this work could probably be done in one-tenth the time, or less, by 3 million of these women, the enormity of this social waste becomes apparent.

If women in 26 million households are ever to escape the present out of date method of performing household work, their work

must be reorganized so that it can be done more efficiently.

The number of "servants" is limited, and even if working and middle class families all had the means to hire them, this would be no "solution," for the number available falls far short of the number of individual households, and "servants" need releasing not only from outmoded methods of work, but from the whole ideology of caste which surrounds their present method of doing socially useful work.

In the introductory chapter to her book, "Home," Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote: "We may all have homes to love and grow in without the requirement that half of us shall never have anything else. We shall have homes of rest and peace for all, with no need for half of us to find them places of ceaseless work and care . . .

"To the child who longs to grow up and be free; to the restless, rebelling boy; to the girl who marries all too hastily as a means of escape; to the man who puts his neck in the collar and pulls while life lasts to meet the unceasing demands of his little sanctuary; and to the woman—the thousands upon thousands of women, who work while life lasts to serve that sanctuary by night and day—to all these it may not be unwelcome to suggest that the home need be neither a prison, a workhouse, nor a consuming fire."

This ideal, pictured by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is more realizable than ever, and more of a necessity than it ever was, for of all the feudalistic lags, none, not even that in agriculture, compares to, the lag in household work, which is a drag even on capitalism.

The feudalistic system that binds the Negro people in the United States has a territorial foundation in the plantation Black Belt in the South. The feudalistic system of woman's work is not founded on land boundaries, but extends over all the nation and exists in industrial centers, where isolated home units, in which women toil at hand labor, stand side by side with factories where production is mechanized and specialized.

Yet, in step with fascistic trends backward, an effort is being made to set household work back still further. Mrs. Ralph Borsodi, in "The New Woman Goes Home," *Scribner's magazine*,

February, 1937, paints a glowing picture of benefits to women if they will only perform work in the home that is now being done outside by food canneries, garment factories, bakeries and laundries, schools and hospitals. She even mentions weaving and a "loom room" in the home.

Capitalism's spokesmen have not been slow about praising the progressive features where work was done more efficiently outside the home, but significantly they have been equally fulsome in praise of the lags, and have told us how indispensable these lags were to our happiness.

It is also fallacious to assume, as some socialists do, that nothing can be done under capitalism to improve housewives' outmoded method of work, and that we must first have socialism before women put their minds to this problem and tackle its solution.

This attitude is as illogical as saying that workers must wait for socialism to obtain higher wages, and have the conditions of their work improved, or that old persons must wait for pensions, or the unemployed sick for social medical care.

## XXX

### *Outmoded Housing*

**T**HE WORK HOUSEWIVES DO, whether household tasks or care of children, is complicated and made harder by the outmoded houses in which most women perform this socially useful work, for the population of the richest country in the world is poorly housed.

We quote below from the booklet, "Homes for Workers, Housing Division Bulletin No. 3," issued by the P.W.W., United States Government Printing Office:

"In 1934 the Department of Commerce conducted an inventory of housing conditions in 64 typical cities. Among these million and a half homes, 250,000 either needed major repairs (which means almost complete rebuilding) or were unfit to live in; 250,000 of these homes were overcrowded; 75,000 had no running water; 202,000 had no indoor water closet; and 303,000 had no provision for bathing. Now these figures should be multiplied many times if we think of all the cities in the United States . . . ."

"From the census of 1930 we learn that less than one out of six farm dwellings had running water and less than one out of seven had electric light. The Department of Agriculture tells us that in 1934 only half of the farm dwellings in the country were in fair condition. This means that the other half—about 3 million—either needed major repairs or were not fit to live in . . ."

What is the outlook for overcoming this situation? Great difficulties exist, but they are not insurmountable, although from the Government pamphlet we learn that it involves a change in "traditional practices."

"Unless traditional practices are greatly changed we can assume that only those in the upper income groups will be provided with good, new housing; that a certain amount of cheap, shoddy housing will be built for the middle income groups; and that of the 6½ million homes which the Senate says should be torn down and replaced will continue to house the poor until they fall down by themselves."

No housing problem can, of course, be permanently settled, because life changes and the needs of the people and their wishes change in accordance with the new life. So, without in any sense pretending to say what type of housing future generations of men and women will require, let us nevertheless consider the problem in housing that confronts us right now; let us consider the next step.

What kind of housing is most desirable for the next step? Undoubtedly the answer must be apartment houses, where several families live together under one roof, but in private apartments. This is especially suitable for districts densely populated because of proximity to work, or for other reasons.

Even the rich now appear to prefer living in apartments rather than in isolated houses. Their apartments of 8, 10 and 12 or more rooms hold little comparison with the cheap 1, 2 or 3 room crowded apartments that have been erected to house the lower middle and working class families.

But roomy apartments, air conditioned and with sound proofed walls, pleasantly furnished and conveniently located are well within our range of attainment for all.

There is ample building material and workmen ready to construct such homes. There is also the pressing need. So, given the two primary requisites, the need and facilities to supply those needs, who can say that such a demand is impractical, or that we cannot surmount the obstacles to their attainment?

In considering what kind of housing is desirable for us now, we must take into account the work now done in the home and how new housing can contribute to an improvement in the method of doing that work.

Large, new, well-built apartment houses would permit of centrally arranged housecleaning units, somewhat similar to the work performed now by chambermaids in large hotels. It would permit of central places for dining.

We are liable to contrast public dining as it exists today for the great majority of the people, with the home cooking method. This would be an error.

Public eating places today, for the most of us, are of very poor quality. The food very often is ruined either by improper cooking or by being kept too long afterward, and more often than not is of poor quality to begin with.

The method of preparing and handling it is hygienically questionable in many cases, and not only do workers and the lower middle class find it difficult to pay the price but they dine very unsatisfactorily when they do.

Let us instead contrast home cooking as it exists now, with dining in the better, higher priced restaurants; let us proceed from the basis that unsanitary, unsatisfactory restaurants will be scrapped under a better method.

At the same time, the new apartments could be equipped with individual kitchens, as now. This would allow for families making whatever deviations to the general arrangement that fitted their particular wishes, but in general, meals could be taken in central dining rooms and, on occasion, served in the apartments from the central kitchen.

There should, of course, be centrally situated nurseries for children, where they could be looked after by trained nurses during hours designated by their mothers.

According to the National Accident Prevention Conference, 50,000 children are killed or injured yearly while playing in the streets. Therefore, the new housing program must include more and larger playgrounds for children.

Better parks and recreational facilities, gymnasiums and swimming pools could be built to meet the demands of a population with more leisure. And study clubs and adult schools would also be in greater demand, especially by housewives.

Capitalism's propagandists have not been slow about senti-

mentalizing a situation where overworked mothers cared for their children unaided. One syndicated column described in detail a factory woman home from work, tired, hot and harassed, going back and forth from small dark, sweltering bedroom, where three supperless children tossed in their sleep, to tending the cooking supper in the small dark kitchen. She must save the light.

But, this writer declared, here was pure, intense love, generated by hardships; a love not to be found except in such surroundings. And while such writers do not always go so far, they keep unceasingly at the task.

Many American working mothers have to go to work and leave their small children at home alone and fear that they will perish by fire, or at the hands of some degenerate. Others are unable to pay for leaving their children in day nurseries, or children's homes, or hire a nurse maid even part of the time, but must wear themselves down by unceasing application to the demands of small children.

For good measure, propagandists tell these mothers that the Soviet Union, which provides so much outside the home care for children (5,000,000 of pre-school age being cared for in daytime nurseries and kindergartens alone), is robbing motherhood of its greatest joy.

Perhaps in a few days, following the attack on the Soviet system, in the same column we read about the beauties of the American school system, which gives mothers such a rest and relief by taking care of their children several hours a day during the school term.

Or, in season, there will be a reminder that the school term will soon end and then mothers will really have a chance to appreciate our American school system which has relieved them of the partial care of their children for awhile.

They laud the intellectual advantage and benefits to the mother who spends so many hours of her day on the mental level of

small children, and tell how very much adults can learn from children. There are success stories of women who soared to great heights as a result of long sessions with infantile intellects.

Some space is also given over to chiding the rich for hiring nursemaids and missing the ennobling effect of washing their babies' diapers. Perhaps few of the rich see this and those who do probably know that it was written for the effect it would have upon the poor.

## XXXI

### *The Family Crisis*

**S**OME PARENTS DREAM all their lives of attaining security and failing they often become an easy prey to owning class propaganda and their dreams live on in their child, and they think if only they can urge and goad him on that he and at last they, through him, can escape at least in their old days, the insecurity and drudgery they have known. Especially has the child been emphasized as an escape medium for the woman.

During expanding capitalism the family was a subsistence unit, and when a member was unemployed, or sick, the other members of the family who were well and working, collectively carried the burden. Such a method functioned best for the family when enforced idleness and sickness were temporary.

When idleness was permanent through disability or old age, life for such persons and for those forced to carry the burden of their support, often became a torment.

And if any member wilfully failed to do his or her part, as if a daughter became parasitical on the family group by refusal to do her share of the household work, or contribute to the family economy in some other manner, or a son refused to contribute his share to the family upkeep, under a system predicated on the theory that he would so contribute, or if parents either mismanaged or misused their own earnings, or those of their children, further sources of dissatisfaction were opened.

But entirely aside from such deviations, the method in general was inadequate even when each member of the family did his or her best, and increasingly during the era of economic decline, the family cannot meet this social obligation levied upon it.

Adults cannot supply youth with prolonged schooling, and with medical and dental care, nor give them some financial aid, a loan on which to get married, or pay for hospitalization for the first born, or support them until they can find work, nor give them a job on the farm or in the store, to the extent that they once did.

Youth, in turn, cannot carry the burden of aging parents, and supply them with homes and with medical and dental care, and cannot stand in relation to their parents as children once did.

Therefore, what was once considered a family problem alone is, through economic change, being transformed into a social problem.

The Federal Social Security Act was passed August 14, 1935. We quote below the reasons for the Act as set forth in the pamphlet, "Old Age Security in the Economic Program," printed in the U. S. Government printing office and issued by the Committee on Economic Security, Frances Perkins, Chairman:

"The savings of the group who are now old have been largely wiped out; their jobs are gone and when employers add to their personnel it is the young, not the old, to whom they will turn. Nor are the middle-aged who are unemployed, and they number millions, in a much more favored position. It is against the policy of many of our greatest industries to employ or re-employ them.

"Their savings have been spent, too, if not swallowed up by bank failures or worthless securities . . . Unless something is done, and done quickly, these aged and middle-aged unemployed will constitute a tremendous burden on their children, and will bind not one, but three, generations in the slough of economic despond."

The North Western Life Insurance Company, in a pamphlet issued to its salesmen, pointed out the inadequacy of the Act, to show that this law will not seriously interfere with the insurance business:

"Death benefits under the Act will be of very slight amount in most cases; competition with the essential business of life insurance . . . protecting dependents against the loss of their breadwinner will be negligible.

"There will be no death benefit after pension payments have been

made for 4 years and 8 months . . . In no case will a man of 70 years of age or over have any death benefit whatever . . ."

Old Age Retirement Benefits, under the Act, will not be paid to a population of 7½ million persons who were over 65 years of age when it was passed. Furthermore, it is pointed out in the above pamphlet, that the Act did not include anyone engaged as a proprietor of a business, no matter how small, and excluded the majority of professionals.

The Act excluded agricultural workers, domestic servants, casual laborers, crews of vessels, Federal, State and municipal employees, as well as employees of religious, charitable or educational institutions. It also excluded all self employed and non-employed.

It is estimated that only a little more than one-half of the gainfully occupied and only about one-third of the total adult population were covered by the Act.

The above Act does not apply to housewives, and, furthermore, the majority of women who work outside the home come within the excluded categories. A larger proportion of Negro women are excluded than whites.

Three-fourths of all Negro women are working in agriculture and domestic service, both excluded occupations under the Act.

Dorothy Douglas, in "The Social Security Act," published in "The Woman Today," March, 1937, analyzed the inadequacy of the Act with regard to old age retirement, unemployment provisions, and its inapplicability to women, and stated:

"Viewed against such a background of inadequacy, the need of real security legislation becomes overwhelming. Its necessary provisions are obvious; nation-wide coverage, to include all workers and their dependents as well; provision without interruption, without shuttling the family around from one agency to another, for the whole period during which the earnings are interrupted; benefits certain, not dependent upon a payroll tax which works in inverse ratio to need, and benefits adequate in amount to sustain a minimum family standard of living."

There exist, besides the Government old age retirement plans, plans of companies and corporations for their employees. There were 420 such private plans in 1930 and they increased to 750 by 1935.

These plans of private industry have been called "industrial peonage," since the threat of withholding the benefit is used to compel various kinds of subservience to the employers. The right of pension is often determined by the good will of the employer and the worker has no legal claim to the pension.

When Morris Packing Company merged with Armour Packing Company, Morris pensioners were denied their pensions, and when they sued in court, the decision rendered was against them.

About two million young people come on the scene each year in the United States, and of these the National Youth Administration, established by the President, June 26, 1935, had by May 26, 1936, given to 605,000 one-third of their subsistence.

According to the "Youth Arsenal of Facts," prepared by Labor Research Association, and published by International Publishers:

NYA employed a peak of 444,000 youth on student aid and 192,000 on work projects in April 1937. During May 1938, NYA had about 327,000 high school, college and graduate students on its rolls and 179,000 out-of-school youth in the work program. Negro youth assisted by NYA numbered about 50,000 in March 1938.

Medical and dental care of those too poor to pay is made as hard to obtain as possible, to cause people who are in great need of such attention to go without it.

The Los Angeles General Hospital made the entrance requirements more severe during the winter of 1938, in order to keep the number of non-paying cases from increasing, since the needs and demands for hospitalization increases during winter.

New social forms arising to fit the changing economic structure, old age pensions, the National Youth Administration, school loans, scholarships, free medical care and unemployment relief are all

still very inadequate, and all have had to be striven for persistently, yet despite drawbacks and handicaps, very definite new social trends are apparent.

Still the old method of demanding that the family assume all responsibility under a changed economic life still persists, and there is terrific conflict between the old ideology and the new economic conditions.

Women especially find their lives affected by this fundamental social change. First they were offered "escape" from economic insecurity through their husbands, and that failing, they were promised "escape" through their children.

How, now, are they going to react to the new problem?

In the struggle for the survival of her family and herself that inevitably and unmistakably lies ahead, women, we predict, will play an active, and perhaps even a decisive role.

## XXXII

### *Woman and the People*

**W**HEREVER THE PEOPLE have come to power they have always freed women, and wherever the people have made gains, women have shared directly in those gains, and a more liberal attitude has been shown woman as a person in her own right.

The democratic People's Front in France set aside laws which had bound French women for a hundred years, as illustrated by the following:

Paris, Feb. 12, (A.P.)—French women were assured freedom today from their centuries-old marriage obligation to obey their husbands . . . the far-reaching civil rights bill—has been approved by both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Under the Code Napoleon, promulgated in 1803, and the law of the land until now, a married woman, like a child or an insane person, was denied civil rights.

"French Women Get Civil Rights,"  
Los Angeles Times, Feb. 13, 1938.

But, toward the latter part of 1939, violent reaction appeared in France and the gains the people made under the democratic front were wiped out, and time was set back for women, too, all on the claim that the safety of the nation, during war time, made this necessary. So great are the profits to the two hundred ruling families of France, as a result of this move against the people, that it is considered to be one of the principal reasons for the declaration of war in 1939.

The basic, liberating attitude of the people toward women was also illustrated in China. In districts where the people came to dominant power women were given land equally with men, when land was distributed. Divorce was legalized. Compulsory and child marriages outlawed. Schools welcomed women, and social

activities hitherto closed to them were now their legitimate affair as much as man's.

The progressive people's movement in Mexico manifested the same forward attitude, and demanded equal rights for women, specifically the right to vote and equal pay for equal work.

The Spanish people, even while engaged in a bitter life and death battle with the fascist invaders, found time to strike away many of the centuries-old shackles which had bound the women of Spain.

In the Soviet Union, where women collectively are joint owners with men of the means of production, women have attained the highest social and economic status that they have ever had since the overthrow of primitive free society.

The high status of women in the Soviet Union was achieved by three distinct but closely related moves in the fields of law, economics and culture.

The equality of Soviet women was made a part of the law of the land, and special protective legislation was enacted to equalize woman's role as a childbearer. Article 122, of the Stalinist Constitution, enacted in 1937, states:

Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life. The possibility of exercising these rights of women is insured by affording women equally with men the right to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by State protection of the interests of mother and child, maternity leave with pay and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens.

Albert Rhys Williams, in his book "The Soviets," says that the Soviet Union has put into practice the most advanced ideas of the feminists relating to woman, and that it is no longer a question of a woman deciding between work and marriage, but that she has both, just as men in the United States today do not "make up their minds" whether to work or marry. So here is economic

freedom from marriage both as a means of livelihood, and as a channel through which to reach useful work.

In the field of culture a struggle was waged by the most advanced strata of the people, aided by the Soviet Government, against the backward elements of the population who held to the old program of some form of subservience for women: wife-beating, discrimination in schooling, employment, politics or social life.

Thus we have in the experiences of Soviet women, further proof that woman's interests penetrate into every phase of the economic, political and cultural life of a country and that her status is always affected by that of the people.

We have also shown in the preceding chapters that this process is not peculiar to a few countries, but applies to every nation, whether the general social trend is forward or backward, and that, due to the world-wide breakdown of capitalism and the collapse of the commodity market, that there is in all capitalist countries a strong economic trend backward.

What is the immediate significance of these two facts, to women in the United States? That women, although they can count on the people's help, must also help themselves.

One of the things that has held women back in the United States, and which still operates against them, has been the reluctance of a great many women to take an active part in the people's struggles for a better life.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to overlook one of the reasons for this. The people's organizations, especially since the collapse of the feminist movement, have been slow about taking up the fight for women. It was not that the basic theory was not available, for it was. But, we didn't adequately use the theory that we had to find out things about women's problems and their solution. And because we neglected to particularize about women's grievances, our propaganda remained too general and remote.

A lag similar to this once existed in relation to the Negro people, in this country, but, happily, during the past decade or so great improvement has been made. This is as it should be. What now is needed is to place the oppression of women within the class struggle in the same manner.

Especially have the left sectarians within the people's movements, taken advantage of the lag in theory and agitation to pull back and sabotage efforts to activitize women, and have isolated and thwarted individuals who attempted to get something started.

Lenin said to Clara Zetkin, when they were discussing how to overcome the handicaps of activizing women, "Unfortunately it is still true to say of many of our comrades, 'Scratch a Communist and find a Philistine.' Of course, you must scratch the sensitive spot, their mentality as regards woman." (*Lenin On The Woman Question*, by Clara Zetkin, International Publishers, New York.)

Complicating the present problem in the United States, is a group of sophisticated, cynical young men within the people's organizations who have an attitude toward woman and her problems comparable to that found in the "New Yorker" and "Esquire," ultra-smart magazines of the bourgeoisie.

These persons demand that some one joke about woman's degradation, or stick pins in her, for their delectation and amusement. According to them, there exists a neutral strip, where class interests do not penetrate, and this strip is inhabited by a creature called woman.

But here again, we must trace their backwardness to the lag in detailed analysis of woman's economic and cultural condition, during a time when the bourgeoisie and all their agencies were telling how well situated women were in the United States. How they were now economically secure and all had automobiles, vacuum cleaners and electric washing machines and belonged to leisure clubs.

## XXXIII

### *The Road Ahead*

**T**HE MAJORITY OF WOMEN have, together with the majority of men, general problems as members of society, relating to such issues as building strong trade unions; resistance to reactionary political measures; resistance to reduced living standards through wage cuts and increased living costs; and the necessity of having adequate new housing constructed.

Women have general problems as women, such as "the necessity to struggle against the ideology of female bondage," and against the subservient doctrines preached to them through most of the women's magazines and the general press.

They have general problems arising from the demands levied upon them to train their children in the old patterns that attempt to set men and women against one another in hostile camps.

Women have general problems relating to segregation and isolation. Jim Crowism along either race or sex lines is a bar to political and economic unity.

Finally, women have special problems as women, because of economic groupings, or levels of political awareness.

Most important of all, the housewife must be given credit for performing, in the home, work that is indispensable to the present method of machine production. This will remove her from that sentimental little classification, that, theoretically, restricted her importance to her family. Especially should trade unions and people's organizations be made aware of this fact.

Recognition of the housewife's importance will raise her estimation in her own eyes and in the eyes of society. It will permit her to actively join the ranks of socially useful workers, where

she rightfully belongs, swelling their numbers and releasing her political energies to the people.

Recognition of the social importance of the housewife's work will permit of an analysis and study of her organizing problems, and bring to her aid expert advice and help from experienced organizers and leaders of the people, such as wage workers now enjoy, and which she has never had.

There is a growing demand for the establishment of day nurseries for children, thus freeing women from caring for small children exclusively at home, and of being dragged down physically and mentally by long hours ministering to their wants.

Children's nurseries are in the same class as public schools for children, and should be so considered. It is woman's right to have them, and children's and fathers' right, too.

Women wage workers may join their trade unions, together with the men with whom they work, but housewives who work only at home must have housewives' leagues, or other organizations, framed to cope with their specific economic needs.

Two important, progressive organizations for women are the League of Women Shoppers, which exerts economic pressure through their buying power, and the Women's Auxiliaries of the Trade Unions, formed to assist unions, by feeding strikers, assisting in picket duty, and interviewing employers who discriminate against unionists.

One thing that will aid woman's struggles, is the growing unity between working and middle class women.

The feminist movement attracted large numbers of women from the small propertied classes and some upper class women. Since the aims of the movement, except for deviations, did not go beyond demands for equality of women with men, the aims fitted well the ideology of these propertied class women, who did not want class relations disturbed but wanted only to take their place alongside of upper and middle class men, receive the same kind

of schooling and own property as men of their class did.

But for working women, equality between the sexes was not enough. At best it would be equality of exploitation, low wages, bad working conditions and unemployment equally with the working man. Equality with man was certainly worth struggling for, then as now, because it meant cessation of discrimination based on femaleness, but given sex equality only, there would still be left class inequality.

Economic conditions have now changed for the small property owners and, as a result of this change, equality between the sexes is not now enough for these once propertied women as it would leave them the equals of men faced with economic ruin, in a world where the situation is highly unfavorable for the propertyless to acquire property. Therefore, these women are now the logical allies of working class women, in contra-distinction to being allied with upper class women to the extent that they once were.

Through changing economic conditions working class women now have as their allies working class men to a greater extent than ever before, and there now exists a situation highly favorable to unity between men and women with reference to women's present problems.

Fewer families live on farms and those who do are very definitely and very obviously producing surplus wealth not for themselves but for the bankers. And city families no longer produce commodities which the man, as head of the house, can look upon as a source of income.

Instead, in the majority of households, wife and children are dependent upon the earnings of the husband and father. He no longer exploits his family and there is neither the degree, nor kind, of economic conflict that existed between husband and wife and between father and children, when he did exploit them.

What now is the chief role of the man? To sell his labor power

in a competitive labor market to acquire money to feed, house and clothe his family.

We can find no decisive factor in the present economic arrangement, of the family's dependence upon the man, that should cause the average man to desire a subservient economic and cultural status for women.

It certainly is against his interests, and against his wife's interests, too. For the principal fact remains, that she is held to economic dependence, and an out-of-date method of performing socially useful work, which is reached only by personal invitation.

With this changing economic situation the capitalists have attempted to corrupt woman with new ideology, to fit the new conditions.

Columnists for capitalist newspapers, and other writers, tell her to not let the man off easy. That he can support her and the children in plenty if he will only apply himself as he should, and that she will weaken his character if she takes work outside the home and contributes to the family income, or does not act as though he could support his family on a constantly increasing scale of comfort.

The theory that a woman should not work at all, but be supported in idleness by her husband, comes from the camp of the exploiters. All this makes life for the man harder.

Wives of workers who attempt to live such decayed, perverted theories and consequently fail to hold up their end of the family responsibility, and neglect necessary tasks of cleaning and cooking, are taking their ease at the expense of other members of the family.

A companion theory, applied to society instead of the family, is that the woman should take no part in political and social activities, but let some one do the work for her and save her the trouble, and also the risk of picking the losing side, thus she will always

be safe. But she will not be safe, and neither will her children and her husband, by her following such a course.

The reason neither man, woman, nor child of the working and middle classes will be safe, unless they struggle unitedly against their exploiters, is that the exploiters control the population's means of making a living.

Proof of the tight grip in which the dominant owning class in the United States hold the majority of the population, is contained in the Brookings Institution figures on wealth division. The total wealth at the time of the crisis in 1929 was 425 billions, or \$3,500 per man, woman and child. But 1% of the population owned 83% of the liquid wealth, while 99% owned only 17%.

And no longer can people "escape" to the land. Mortgage indebtedness increased from 3 billion dollars in 1910 to 8½ billion dollars in 1933. These mortgages were acquired principally by the banks and the powerful Wall Street dominated insurance companies, the insurance companies being the largest mortgage owners.

Farm Research reported that more than 1,700,000 farms (about one-fourth of all those in the United States) were sold under the hammer during the eight year period, 1930-1937.

Here is a process of economic strangulation, through increasing monopoly control, that brings in its wake war, repression, poverty, unemployment and disease, and causes cultural and social disintegration. And only the resistance of a united people, with women as active participants, can meet this menace.

THE END.

